A HISTORY OF
BRITISH DIPLOMACY IN TANJORE

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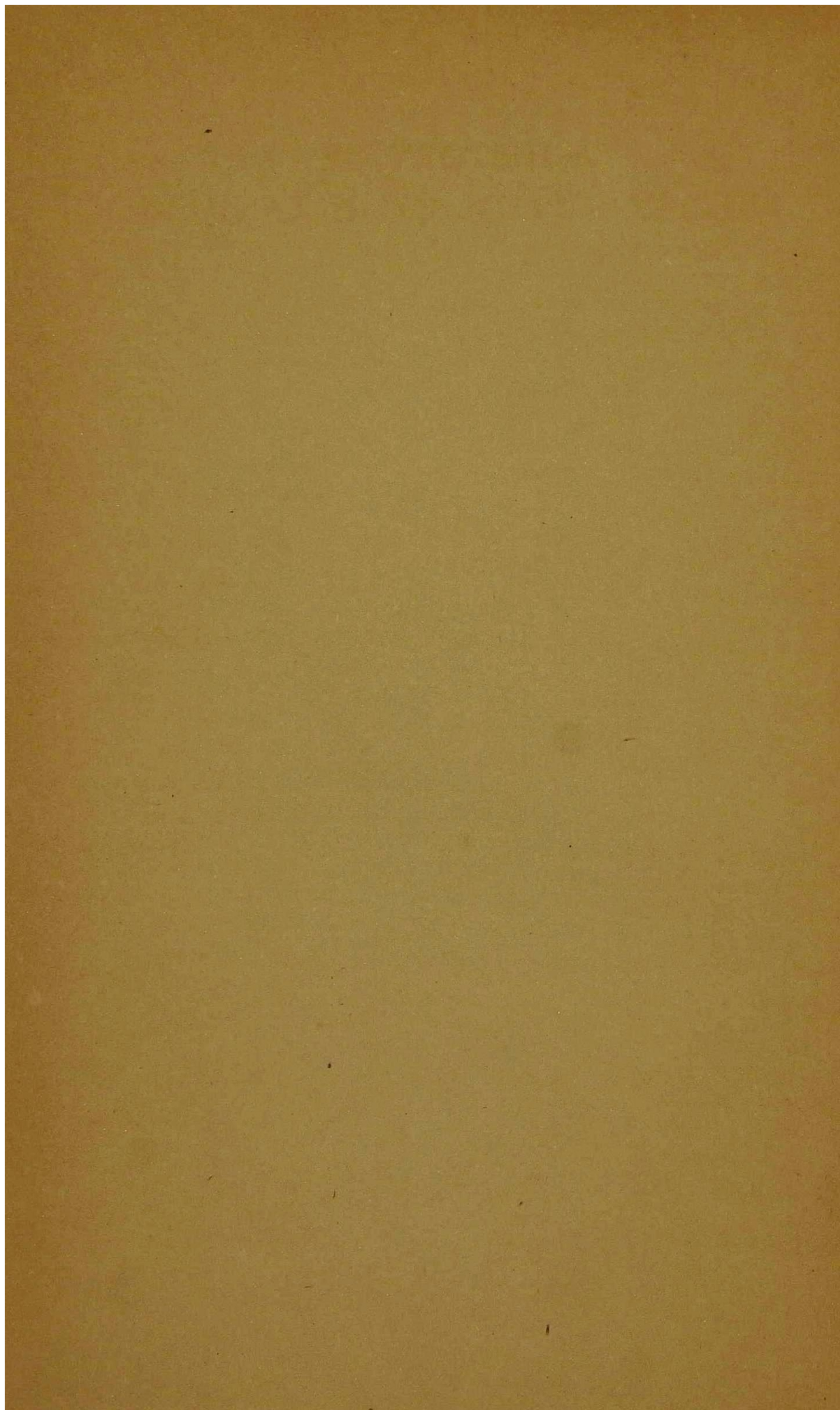
PREFACE

This work is based upon my research in the archives of South India; it furnishes a succinct study of British diplomatic activity in Tanjore from 1749 to 1799. To divide Indian history into Hindu, Moslem and British periods, as was being done conventionally, is to deprive it much of its abiding interest; for it cuts across the otherwise inter-related chain of events. An analytical reconstruction of this branch of study along cultural, economic, political and diplomatic lines is of vital necessity not only to revive interest in it and render it more useful, but also to strengthen rationalism and imagination, needed for progress, in the Indian mind. This work on British diplomacy, restricted to a small region, represents an endeavour towards the realisation of this objective.

The State Archives, Madras, where I did most of my research, possesses an extensive yet precious collection of manuscript records and published works. This offers vast possibilities of research. Still, much needs to be done, for the facilities given to scholars for the study of research material and steps taken for the preservation of documents, preparation of index and organisation of the library are quite inadequate.

My thanks are due to the staff of this archival institution. Mr Jacob Manickam, Curator, Madras Record Office, who kindly permitted me to consult the records, bestowed his attention on my requirements with such solicitude that it greatly contributed to an early completion of my project. Among those who helped me in gathering the data I should like to make particular mention of Mr M. Munuswamy, Mr A. Narayanan, Mr M. P. Ramachandran and Mr P. Natarajan.

Madras K. Rajayyan
October 15, 1968



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TANJORE UNDER THE MARATHAS

[Ref.: Map of Madras Presidency No. 14, State Archives, Madras]

SCALE: 40 MILES TO AN INCH

INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of Tanjore, reputed for the antiquity of its civilization, extent of its empires, liberality of its government, industry of its inhabitants and fertility of its soil, had a chequered history during the eighteenth century. In 1676 the Marathas established their sway over the territory. For several decades since, the frontiers of the state remained unsteady, at times projecting claims on Trichinopoly, Arcot and Mysore. By 1730, however, they became settled around the delta of the River Kaveri. A rich and compact region, it extended along the seacoast for more than seventy miles and from the seashore to the interior along the Kaveri for about sixty miles. River Coleroon gave a natural boundary on the north, separating it from Arcot. On the west it was bounded by the kingdoms of Trichinopoly and Pudukkottai and on the south by Ramnad. The Marathas established their capital in the temple city of Tanjore, the seat of power of the imperial Cholas in the past.

1. The Land and Its People

Situated between 9° 49′ and 11° 24′ of north latitude and 78° 47′ and 79° 52′ east longitude on the eastern coast of peninsular India, Tanjore shares with the rest of the country a tropical climate. Draughts alternate with torrential rains. Average rainfall is about forty inches a year. Still the climate is healthy on the whole, for the proximity of the sea and the occurrence of the monsoon mitigate much of the extremes of temperature. A multiplicity of streams flowing from the Kaveri have rendered the land a well-watered garden. Flat and alluvial for the most part, intersected in every direction by a network of canals and cultivated with paddy, the country presents the pleasing sight of a flourishing land. Groves of palm trees, gardens of plantain fruit or mango trees and plantations of sugarcane add to the variety of its scenic beauty. The country is overstocked with sheep and cattle.

Except in the shrub jungles, very limited in area, where antelope, spotted deer and wild hog are met with, there are no wild animals bigger than jackals. In addition to the green fields, the streams of the Kaveri, the great pagodas, numerous choultries, the minarette of Nagore and the tower of Negapatam form the principal attractions. Sand drifts along the coast, salt swamp on the southern coastline, specimens of rock crystal and sandstone

mark the distinguishing features of landscape. The coastal sea is noted for its fisheries and pearl oyster beds.[1]

Most of the inhabitants belong to the Dravidian stock while others Aryan;—the Parayer and Pallar who are largely field workers and the Vellalar, Pallis and Kallar who are mostly peasants constitute the bulk of the population. The Tamil Brahmins have established themselves in strength at Kumbakonam. The Karaiyans, a fishing community, the Nokkans, originally rope dancers and Melakkarans or professional musicians and the Maratha Brahmins too are found in considerable numbers. Though a peasant community on the whole, many are employed in commerce as well as in manufacture. Situated on the direct maritime routes from Europe to the Indies, the country commands a large volume of trade. Paddy, fruits, brass and copper vessels, silk and carpets form the principal exports while timber, spices, salt and metals, the imports. Nagore, Tranquebar, Negapatam and Devikottai have retained their importance as sea ports down to the present day. Towns are numerous, of which Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Mayuram and Mannargudi are the significant. Tamil is the popular language. Noted for temples and ceremonies, the land is a radiating centre of Hinduism.[2]

2. Early History

The literary traditions, splendid monuments, numerous inscriptions and charitable foundations inherited from the past shed light on the early history of the country. The Early Cholas who held their pioneering flag for the first three centuries of the Christian era gave the country an imperial status. They reached the height of their glory under Karikala. But about 300 A.D. the Kalabrahs, a tribe of the north, swept the Cholas out of power and ruled the country for the next two and a half centuries. Since they passed into oblivion, the Pandyas and the Pallavas kept the land in subordination.

However, towards the close of the ninth century A.D. the Cholas made a remarkable recovery. Aditya I (870-907), the founder of their greatness, re-asserted the independence of Tanjore. His son and successor, Parantaka I (907-953), extended the borders of the Chola empire up to Nellore. Raja Raja the Great (985-1016), the most famous of the Cholas, not only promoted arts of peace

[1] William Hickey, *The Tanjore Mahratta Principality in Southern India*, (Madras, 1874), pp. 4-28.

[2] *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Madras*, vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1908), pp. 132-134.

but extended his imperial sway over parts of Ceylon. Equally great was his son and successor Rajendra Chola (1016-1044). A staunch imperialist, he conquered Ceylon, invaded Orissa and Bengal and subdued the rulers of Malaya and Sumatra. Kulottunga I (1070-1120), the last of the great Cholas, gave peace and order to the country, but his reign witnessed the loss of overseas territories. As the eleventh century drew to an end, the Cholas made their exit from the political scene.[3]

3. Medieval History

Tanjore, since the decline of the Cholas, fell into evil days. During the thirteenth century it passed with most of the Chola possessions under the rule of the Hoysala Ballalas of Dorasamudra or the Pandyas of Madurai. The Pandyas retained control of the territory until the dawn of the fourteenth century. When the Pandyan Empire fell into decay, the country fell a prey to Afghan imperialism. Taking advantage of a disputed succession in the Pandyan country of Madurai, Malik Kafur, the talented general of Ala-ud-din Khilji, occupied the territories in 1311. Tanjore fell into the status of a district of Ma'bar, the southernmost province of the Sultanate of Delhi.[4] In 1335 Jalal-ud-din Hassan, the governor of the province, asserted the independence of Ma'bar. Hassan and his successors, five in number, ruled the Pandya-Chola territories for the next four decades. In 1370 Kumara Kampana, at the command of the forces of Vijayanagar, overthrew the Mohammadan regime. These political changes were, no doubt, significant, but conferred no definite improvement on the territorial status of Tanjore. The country languished under foreign rule.[5]

However, about 1542 Achyuta Raya (1530-1542), the Emperor of Vijayanagar, separated Tanjore from Madurai and organised it into a separate province. Sevvappa Nayak who was appointed the first governor founded the Nayak line of rulers. Under his successors the country enjoyed quasi-independent status. The decline of the Vijayanagar Empire, in consequence of the devastating blow it received at the hands of the Deccani Sultans at Talikota in 1565, left Tanjore free from imperial control. The Nayak kings, in general, were able and benevolent; the greatest

[3] K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas* (Madras, 1955), pp. 110-301.

[4] R. C. Majumdar, ed., *The History and Culture of the Indian People, The Delhi Sultanate* (Bombay, 1960), pp. 53 and 279.

[5] N. Venkataramanayya, *The Early Muslim Expansions in South India* (Madras, 1942), pp. 13-128.

of whom was Raghunatha Nayak (1600-1634). They built most of the forts and Vaishnava temples in the country, promoted trade and gave order. The king, assisted by his ministers and governors, supervised the administration. The villages, however, enjoyed local autonomy as under the Cholas.[6]

In their foreign relations, the Nayaks of Tanjore adopted a line of loyalty to the Empire of Vijayanagar and opposition to the Nayaks of Madurai. This policy saddled them in frequent troubles. Raghunatha Nayak of Tanjore entered into a coalition with Mysore and Sri Ranga III (1642-1677), the Emperor of Vijayanagar, in an attempt to suppress the Nayaks of Madurai. To avert a crisis, Madurai forged an alliance with the ruler of Jinji and the Portuguese. In the wars that followed both parties suffered heavy losses. The forces of Madurai and her allies broke down the great dam on the Kaveri. But Raghunatha Nayak wreaked vengeance in the fields of Toppur where he won a signal victory over Madurai. Tirumala Nayak (1623-1659), the greatest of the Nayak kings of Madurai, now sought the aid of Bijapur. This saved Madurai from extinction, but subsequently the Sultan of Bijapur changed sides in an attempt to exploit the situation to his advantage. His forces led by Shahji Bhonsle levied contributions upon the warring Nayaks. Taking the side of Tanjore, the Sultan assisted in sending three expeditions against Madurai but Tirumala Nayak by a desperate defence repulsed the attacks. Next it was the turn of Madurai. Chokkanatha Nayak (1659-1682), the successor of Tirumala Nayak, carried the war into Tanjore in retaliation. In 1673 he killed Vijaya Raghava, the last of the Nayaks of Tanjore, and occupied the kingdom. The tragic end of the Tanjore-Nayaks forms the subject of a popular legend to this day. Tanjore became part of Madurai, but before long Alagiri Nayak, the provincial governor, revolted and declared his independence. Madurai, weakened by repeated wars, found it impossible to reconquer the lost province.[7]

4. Rise of the Marathas

The conflict between Alagiri Nayak and Chokkanatha Nayak invited foreign intervention in Tanjore. Before the fall of Tanjore, the queen of Vijaya Raghava sent her young son Chengamaladas

[6] R. Sathianatha Aiyer, *History of the Nayaks of Madura* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 90-95.

[7] R. Sathianatha Aiyer, *Tamilaham in the 17th Century* (Madras, 1956), pp. 90-95.

to safety to the Dutch settlement of Negapattam. Finding an opportunity of regaining power in the rebellion of Alagiri Nayak against Madurai, the followers of the fallen Nayaks requested the aid of Bijapur for crowning Chengamaladas. Welcoming this, Adil Shah, the Sultan, sent his general Ekoji on an expedition to Tanjore. Ekoji, otherwise called Venkoji, was the son of Shahji Bhonsle by his wife Tukka Bai Mohitay and half-brother of Sivaji. Threatened by the Bijapuri expedition, Alagiri Nayak appealed to Madurai for succour, but Chokkanatha Nayak turned a deaf ear. Ekoji defeated Alagiri Nayak in the battle at Ayyampet, occupied Tanjore and crowned Chengamaladas as King of Tanjore. In 1676, on the death of Adil Shah, Ekoji usurped the throne for himself. This event started the Maratha rule of Tanjore.

This was a time when the Marathas had been emerging as a formidable military power in South India. After establishing themselves as a leading power at Satara and Kolhapoor on the western coast, they acquired territories on the Carnatic coast. The hardy warriors of the western mountains, they settled down on the plains of Tanjore. They faced no serious opposition, but gained control of a wealthy people to rule over and obtained possession of a rich country to support them. However, as time went on, they sunk into luxury and easy living. Fall in moral standards together with internal feuds and foreign incursions not only arrested their expansion to other regions of the coast but rendered their hold on Tanjore itself precarious.

In 1676-1677 Sivaji led a triumphant expedition to the Carnatic. He established Maratha regime at Vellore as well as at Jinji. The rise of rival Maratha powers created barriers to the expansion of Tanjore to the north. In 1678 Ekoji attacked the Maratha force, stationed by Sivaji in the Carnatic, but was defeated. The unity of the Maratha powers appeared at stake. Sivaji, however, in a spirit of statesmanship, agreed to a compromise by which the two brothers consented to share the revenues of the Carnatic between themselves. In 1680 the relations between the two brothers again strained as the result of Sivaji's acquisition of sovereign rights over Tanjore and the Carnatic from Bijapur. In the same year Sivaji passed away. Now Ekoji severed all connections with Satara and established the independence of Tanjore.[8]

In 1684, on the death of Ekoji, his son Shahji ascended the throne. A liberal prince, he built choultries, patronised Marathi language and improved the fortifications of Tanjore. On his death

[8] William Hickey, *The Tanjore Mahratta Principality in Southern India*, (Madras, 1874), pp. 81-83.

in 1712 without an heir, his brother Serfoji I assumed the throne. In 1728 Serfoji died and his brother Tukkoji came to power. His reign lasted up to 1736. The reigns of these princes witnessed the steady expansion of the Moghal Empire to the South. This development seriously impaired the independence of the country. Tanjore made attempts for the annexation of Ramnad, Sivaganga and Pudukkottai, but proved futile. The death of Tukkoji in 1736 marked the outbreak of internal disorders and the beginning of European intervention.[9]

5. Relations of Maratha Rulers with Local Powers

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, the Moghals appeared in strength in South India. The Maratha powers in particular experienced in greater degree the pressure of Moghal imperialism than ever before. King Shahji of Tanjore assisted his cousin Rajaram in his war against Aurangzeb, but could not check the rising tide of Moghal expansionism. In 1691 Zulficar Khan, the Moghal general, forced Shahji himself to submit and to pay a tribute of four lakhs of rupees. Since 1694 Zulficar Khan sent two more expeditions to the banks of the Kaveri and exacted contribution from the state. In 1698 the Moghals reduced the Marathas of Jinji to submission. These developments not only neutralised the sovereignty of Tanjore but deprived it of the support of other Maratha powers.

Aurangzeb created the province of the Carnatic with Arcot as its headquarters. In 1694 he appointed Zulficar Khan as his Nawab at Arcot. Daud Khan (1706-1713), Saadut-ul-lah-Khan (1713-1722) and Dost Ali (1722-1740) held the reins of power in succession. These Nawabs not only asserted the Moghal sovereignty over the kingdom but reduced it to complete vassalage. Daud Khan collected tribute from Tanjore regularly.[10] Nawab Saadut-ul-lah-Khan stationed an army on the southern bank of the Kaveri, obviously to keep Tanjore and Trichinopoly under subjection.[11] In 1732 Dost Ali sent his son Safdar Ali and son-in-law Chanda Sahib on an expedition to Tanjore. The invading forces destroyed the villages, plundered the country and killed the inhabitants. Threatened with the desolation of the whole country,

[9] K. R. Subramanian, *The Maratha Rajas of Tanjore* (Mylapore, 1928), pp. 26-36.

[10] S. Hussayn Nainar, ed., *Tuzak-i-Walajahi*, part I (Madras, 1934), pp. 58-64.

[11] ibid., pp. 107-109.

Rajah Tukkoji purchased peace at a heavy price.[12] The financial resources rather than military strength now assisted the survival of the kingdom.

Despite the threat from the Moghals, the Maratha kings made a determined endeavour to expand their territory to the south. The principalities of Pudukkottai, Sivaganga and Ramnad were not only small but appeared weak. The existence of Madurai, the other neighbouring state, ruled by the Nayaks with Trichinopoly as their capital, on the other hand, offered no scope of expansion to the west. The intervention of Serfoji I (1712-1728) in the internal affairs of Ramnad seeking territorial gains started a long period of conflict between Tanjore and the Marawars. The opportunity came about 1724 when Tanda Tevar and Bhavani Sankaran contested for the throne of Ramnad. Tanjore took up the cause of Bhavani Sankaran while Madurai allied itself with Tanda Tevar, the ruling chief, commonly called Setupati. In consequence, an internal feud assumed major proportions. In the battle that followed, Tanjore emerged triumphant. Setupati Tanda Tevar was killed and the forces of Madurai, his ally, were routed. Bhavani Sankaran upon assumption of the throne ceded a part of his territory to Tanjore in grateful acknowledgment of its services. Subsequently, the opportunistic Serfoji changed sides. Katta Tevar, the uncle of Tanda Tevar, offered the cession of more territory in return for military assistance against Bhavani Sankaran. In 1724, supported by Serfoji, he captured power and rewarded his ally, Tanjore.

[12] L. Besse, *Father Beschi, His Times and His Writings* (Trichinopoly, 1918), pp. 121-138.

In the *Indian Antiquary* (vol. 46, Bombay, 1947, p. 218), it is asserted that the Moghals annexed Tanjore. But this is not supported by facts. The Annual Letter of the Madura Mission of 1732 merely says that the Moghals desolated the Tanjore country. The Letter of 1733 does not mention any Moghal invasion of the state. The Letter of 1734 states that the Moghals overran the whole country and obliged the ruler to purchase peace at an enormous price. Nevertheless, these letters make it clear that Tanjore was not annexed in 1732, 1733 or 1734. The annexation was only a later occurrence.

The Annual Letter of the Madura Mission of 1732 tells of the large indemnity the Rajah paid to the Moghals. Thereupon it remarks: "But this was no loss to the king; for after a short time he squeezed the whole amount which he had paid to the Moghals out of his subjects: unfortunately people who thus were plundered first by their enemy and then by their king". This extract indicates how Rajah Tukkoji made the inhabitants bear the brunt of the troubles, in disregard to the welfare of his subjects.

Tukkoji (1728-1736), the brother and successor of Serfoji, decided to occupy the whole of Ramnad. With this end in view, he championed the claims of Bhavani Sankaran, a prisoner at Tanjore. In 1732 the forces of Tanjore advanced into the Marawar territory, set fire to the villages and threatened Ramnad, the capital. However, Tanda Tevar with the energetic support of Sasivarna Tevar, the ruler of Sivaganga, administered a deadly blow to the advancing enemy. The Marawa troops not only expelled the invaders from Ramnad, but reoccupied the districts ceded to Tanjore in the past.[13] This marked the failure of the machinations of Tukkoji aimed at territorial expansion southwards. Though he failed in Ramnad, a similar bid made in Madurai proved successful. In 1732 on the outbreak of a civil war in this Nayak kingdom, he supported Queen Minakshi against her rival Bangaru Tirumalai and occupied Koilody and Elangad, two valuable districts situated on the western border of Tanjore. This territorial acquisition won for the country the possession of 'anacat', the dam on the Kaveri. In 1734 Tukkoji sent his forces against Pudukkottai. The Tanjoreans occupied most of the state and besieged Tirumayam where the Tondaiman, as the ruler was known, took his last stand. The Setupati of Ramnad, for fear that the surrender of Pudukkottai would imperil the security of his state, sent his troops for the aid of the Tondaiman. In consequence, the siege of Tirumayam became protracted. Now, Chanda Sahib who commanded the Carnatic forces stationed at Trichinopoly saw his opportunity. On the advance of his army to Tanjore, the forces of Tukkoji raised the siege and sought to intercept the enemy. But defeated by Chanda Sahib, the Tanjoreans retreated. Ananda Rao, the General of Tanjore, died of wounds. The Carnatic forces plundered the whole country and exacted a large contribution from the Rajah. Chanda Sahib made no attempt to annex the state, yet he curbed its growing power and held its expansionist tendencies under check.[14]

Nevertheless, the Maratha princes of Tanjore made an energetic effort to expand their power. But their endeavour made no headway in the face of insuperable odds. Except for the loss of Koilody and Elangad, Madurai checked their advance to the west. The rival regime of Jinji and subsequently the advent of the Moghals prevented the acquisition of territory in the north while

[13] J. Du Pre in Council, 3 April 1771, Military Consultations (hereinafter referred to as M. C.), vol. 41, pp. 107-109.

[14] Annual Letter of the Madura Mission, 14 July 1735, L. Besse, *Father Beschi, His Times and His Writings* (Trichinopoly, 1918), pp. 135-137.

the united defence presented by the small principalities of the south thwarted a similar bid in the south. In the meantime, the Moghals made deep inroads into the sovereign rights of Tanjore. Still the Marathas stabilised their regime in Tanjore. This was accomplished either by the employment of military power or by the application of financial resources.

6. Advent of the European Powers and Diplomacy of the English

Even before the Marathas established their authority over Tanjore, the commercial potentialities of the country had attracted European enterprise. The Nayaks of Tanjore had offered trading facilities to Portugal. At different places the Portuguese established factories of which Negapattam grew into prominence. The Dutch occupied this place in 1660 and made it their headquarters on the east coast of South India. The Danes had a settlement at Tranquebar since 1690 but their commercial interest appeared limited in scope. Noted for their religious zeal, the Danish Lutherans organised the Tranquebar Mission in 1706.[15] The keen rivalry between the Madura Mission of the Jesuits and the Tranquebar Mission of the Protestants characterised the early history of Christianity in the Carnatic.

Not until the beginning of the eighteenth century could the English and the French establish their commercial interest in Tanjore. For long the Dutch thwarted their endeavours. Still, in other parts of India both these powers acquired numerous footholds.

Organised into a company in 1600 and struggling against internal odds and external enemies, the English merchants appeared in the markets of India by 1612. They opened factories at Surat, Bombay, Agra, Lucknow, Hugli, Kasimbazar, Vizagapatam, Masulipatam, Fort St. George and Fort St. David. In 1639 they acquired their first territorial possession in Madras from the Rajah of Chandragiri. This marked a departure from a purely mercantile policy to territorial interest.[16]

Largely owing to the efforts of Colbert, the minister of King Louis XIV, a French Company for trade with India came into existence, in 1664. Granted power to conquer and occupy territories, the French traders acquired Pondicherry from Bijapur in 1674 and made it their capital in India. They set up factories at

[15] Alexr Rea, *Monumental Remains of the Dutch East India Company in the Presidency of Madras* (Madras, 1897), p. 8.

[16] W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire* (London, 1866), pp. 366–378.

Surat, Masulipatam and Chandernagore, but their trade proved not very promising. They turned their attention to the establishment of an empire, rather than to the capture of market.[17]

As diplomacy appeared of vital importance for the success of commercial enterprise, the English rightly attached great importance to it. Queen Elizabeth sent Sir John Milden Hall to the Moghal Empire in an attempt to obtain privileges for British merchants. In 1608 Captain Hawkins went to the court of Jahangir. Sir Thomas Roe, sent as ambassador by King James I to the court of Jahangir, was the most successful of the early envoys. He obtained substantial concessions of trade. In 1634 the English obtained right to trade in Bengal. The Golden Firman, secured from the Sultan of Golconda, placed the Company's trade at Masulipatam on a favourable footing. Advantages granted by Shah Jahan contributed to the growth of trade at Hugli, Balasore, Lucknow and Kasimbazar.

The period that followed witnessed a change in the substance of diplomacy; from commercial negotiations it turned into political machinations. Different factors convinced the English of the advantages in such a transformation of their diplomacy. In the conflict between the Indian powers particularly between the Moghals and the Marathas, they found an opportunity of supporting one against the other and wrest privileges. With the Moghal Empire ceasing to be an effective central authority, they saw the necessity of keeping the local rulers too in good humour. The repeated irruptions of the Indian forces on British factories, particularly Sivaji's pillage of Surat in 1664, Shaista Khan's opposition in Bengal in 1686 and the Mohammadan occupation of the factories at Vizagapatam and Masulipatam in 1689 drove them to the necessity of adopting a vigorous policy, as the alternative meant the abandonment of trade. Above all, guided by the example of the Dutch and the French, the English decided to build up an imperial fabric on the ruins of the Moghal Empire. The English Company's Resolution of 1689 asserted this historic change in its policy. It read: 'The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care, as much as our trade; 'tis that must maintain our force when twenty accidents may interrupt our trade; 'tis that must make us a nation in India. Without that we are but a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's Royal Charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us. And upon this account it is

[17] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India* (Edinburgh, 1909), pp. 15-71.

that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices that we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue, for one paragraph they write concerning trade'. Perhaps the fear of opposition in England and abroad necessitated an emphasis upon the change of circumstances as the factor responsible for this shift in policy, but the resolution defined the goal in categorical terms. This radical shift in policy turned clerks into conquerors, factories into forts and commercial settlements into political headquarters.[18] The first half of the eighteenth century witnessed the beginning of the steady transformation of a commercial concern into an imperial institution in India.

It was during this crucial period in the history of the English in India that they established contacts with Tanjore. They carried with them well-defined interests and objectives: acquisition of commercial privileges, state of traditional hostility with the French, exploitation of internal disorders and extension of political hegemony. The survival of Tanjore as an independent principality depended upon how it appreciated English motives, how it reacted to them and how it sought to forestall them if any.

7. Sources of Information

The Madras Government Records constitute the primary source of information for the history of British relations with Tanjore. Next in importance come the Diaries, Reports and the Tanjore Palace Records. District Manuals, Gazetteers and the Handbooks prepared by the public officials on Tanjore and neighbouring districts largely form secondary sources.

The Records of the Madras Government kept preserved in the Record Office, Egmore, furnish a wide range of information. They come under different categories, the principal of which are the Proceedings of the Madras Council, Fort St. David Consultations, Sundries, Country Correspondence and Despatches to and from England. The proceedings of the Madras Council called Consultations furnish a comprehensive account of the varied official transactions including the views of the Members and their decisions. Between 1746 and 1749 when Madras was in French possession Fort St. David served as the headquarters of the English on the Carnatic coast. The proximity of the place to Tanjore accounted for the keen interest taken by the English Company in Tanjore affairs. In consequence the Fort St. David Consultations reflect the British reaction to the developments in this principality in

[18] W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Empire*, pp. 370–371.

a degree greater than that by the early Madras Records. The Sundries form a miscellaneous collection of records related to political or commercial affairs. The branch of records called the Country Correspondence enclose among other things English translations of the letters written mostly in Marathi, Persian and Tamil sent to and received from the rulers of Tanjore or agents of the English Company. Despatches from London to Madras contain instructions of the Board of Directors to the Madras Council and their letters of approval or disapproval of what their representatives at Madras did or proposed to do. Despatches from Madras to London, on the other hand, deal in general with the official proceedings of the Madras Council. The Private Diaries of Ananda Ranga Pillai, originally written in Tamil, but translated into English and published in twelve volumes between 1904 and 1924 by the Government of Madras enclose notices on military events, political transactions, commercial policy, social habits and family matters. Incidentally the district tells of the French interventions in Tanjore and of the Anglo-French conflicts in this country. Among the Reports and Journals, Lord George Pigot's 'Narrative of the Late Revolution in the Government of Madras' dated 11th of September 1776 and 'Defence of Lord Pigot' dated 1771 are of particular interest. They discuss the transactions of Lord Pigot with Rajah Tuljaji of Tanjore together with the British relations with this principality beginning from 1749. The Report of Major William Fullarton dated the 13th of August 1784 refers to the havoc committed by Hyder Ali in Tanjore during the Second Mysore War (1780-1784). 'The Report of the Tanjore Commissioners' dated 1799 is an account of the revenue and judicial systems as prevailed in the country but contains little reference to the British political relations or their impact upon the land.

The Persian Records of the Nawab of Arcot's Government contain numerous letters on Tanjore. They were either exchanged between the two capitals or sent by political agents or despatched to and received from the Madras Council. They are useful as giving the Nawab's version on the transactions related to Tanjore. The official records of Tanjore written in Marathi language and some of which are preserved in the Madras Record office and Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal Library are of limited scope for consultation. Most of them vanished during the period of Nawab's administration which lasted from 1773 to 1776. Due to irregularities in preservation, the survived records too have suffered considerable damage. The information supplied by them is not only meagre but unconnected. The Letters of Amir Singh shed light

on the schemes he contemplated for the liberation of his country from British tutelage. The records on the administration of Serfoji are of no great value as he reigned not only as a British nominee but restricted the sphere of his power to the fort of Tanjore.

The different branches of the sources furnish wholesome accounts of the British transactions with Tanjore. But they are not free from bias. The occurrence of coloured statements, twisted accounts, flattering pleasantries, false claims and mutual accusations demand caution. A few instances might be noted. Thomas Saunders, Governor of Fort St. George, wrote to Pratap Singh, Rajah of Tanjore on the 23rd of August 1751 in these colourful words: 'The distance of your country from us gives me an opportunity of knowing you only by the great name you bear, remarkable for your valour and justice'.[19] This reflected the British anxiety for obtaining the military support of Tanjore against the French, and not any such genuine impression. Nawab Mohammad Ali in August 1762 asserted that the Rajah of Tanjore used to pay ten lakhs of rupees as tribute to the Subah of Arcot. But an enquiry made by a commission appointed by the Madras Council proved that the Rajah usually paid only four lakhs of rupees.[20] An aggressor accusing a victim is no strange an occurrence in the documents. For instance in 1771 Nawab Mohammad Ali wrote to the Madras Council that the Rajah of Tanjore far from coming into the path of obedience had set forth the Circar and the English Company at defiance and forced their army to lay regular siege to his capital.[21] In fact, guided by the policy that 'attack is the best form of defence', the Nawab sought by this accusation to justify his aggression on Tanjore in 1771. In March 1776 the Nawab informed the Madras Council that the oppressions of Tuljaji, Rajah of Tanjore, in which no tyrant ever exceeded him caused the expulsion of the inhabitants, destruction of their properties and the neglect of cultivation. In fact Mohammad Ali's refusal to permit the Rajah to repair the water courses leading from Trichinopoly to Tanjore caused the neglect of cultivation.[22]

[19] Governor Thomas Saunders, 23 August 1751, letter to Rajah Pratap Singh, Public Country Correspondence (hereinafter referred to as P.C.C.), vol. 4, p. 54.

[20] Governor Josias Du Pre in Council, 6 May 1771, M.C., vol. 39, p. 382.

[21] Nawab Mohammad Ali, 22 December 1771, letter to Governor Josias Du Pre, Military Country Correspondence (hereinafter referred to as M.C.C.), vol. 20, pp. 1-3.

[22] Rajah Tuljaji, no date, letter to his Vakeels at Madras, M.C.C., vol. 25, p. 120

False interpretations too are not wanting. In 1790 G. H. Ram, British Resident at Tanjore, obtained a monopoly of indigo by taking advantage of his political influence with Rajah Amir Singh. When the Rajah complained of the political pressure brought on him, the Madras Council deliberately blamed him. Sir Charles Oakeley, the Governor, accused Amir Singh: 'We cannot approve your conduct that you are persuaded through the evil counsel of your Sirkeel (minister) to enter into a plan of seducing him (Resident) to betray the important trust committed to him'.[23] In January 1796 the English under threat of arrest compelled Rajah Amir Singh to cede a part of his territory. But the Madras Council boldly reported to the Bengal Council and the Court of Directors that the Rajah signed a treaty ceding a part of his territory not only with willingness but also with pleasure. On the basis of the false report sent by the Madras Council, the Court of Directors readily gave its approbation to the usurpation of Rajah's territory. But the absence of any series of correspondence with Tanjore or any reference to the cession of territory in the records before it was effected and the admission of the Resident at Tanjore that an armed force halted at the gate of the palace during his conference with the Rajah establish beyond doubt that the contention of the Madras Council was not only untenable but criminal.[24] In addition to these irregularities, many of the records especially of the early period present collections of miscellaneous reports on military transactions, political dealings, judicial proceedings, land revenue, commercial affairs and social customs, all mixed up. This renders the gathering of relevant data difficult and time absorbing.

However, it is possible to tackle these vagaries and exploit them profitably for historical treatment. Margin is to be allowed to the angle from which interested persons whether public officials or private individuals looked at the events. Internal scrutiny is called for to understand the pros and cons of the developments. A comparison between different categories of sources is essential not only to complement the data but for obtaining a correct perspective. A selective study and critical analysis of the documents of the period enable the historian to comprehend the intricate aspects of the transition of the English East India Company in Tanjore from the days of competitive existence to those of absolute mastery and its transformation from a commercial power to political authority.

[23] Governor Sir Charles Oakeley, 11 December 1790, letter to Rajah Amir Singh of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 40, p. 226.

[24] Lord Hobart in Council, 26 July 1796, M.C., vol. 208, p. 3101.

CHAPTER I

IMPACT OF ANGLO-FRENCH CONFLICT ON TANJORE

Two factors in particular, commerce and competition, drove the European powers into Tanjore. The vast agricultural resources, products of manufacture, facilities of transport, open hinderland and the numerous ports of the country offered opportunities of great magnitude to the enterprising merchants of the west. A central location on the Carnatic coast and on the highway from Europe to the Indies conferred upon it a strategic importance. Fascinated by these circumstances, the English as well as the French developed keen interest in the affairs of the kingdom. No wonder, they held out a vision not only to capture the market but to establish territorial interest in their bid to promote commerce and to outwit the rival power.

Despite these compelling self interests, neither the English nor the French made any hasty attempt to thrust themselves into the state. A struggle for power within Tanjore, however, invited their intervention, leading to their acquisition of territories. During the years that followed Tanjore drifted itself into the Anglo-French wars, fought in the Carnatic. The country emerged as one of the victorious powers, but neither in territory nor in status it reaped any substantial benefit.

1. French Acquisition of Karaikkal, 1739

Tukkoji, the Maratha king who ruled Tanjore from 1728 to 1736, had five sons: Bava Sahib, Sahuji, Anna Sahib, Nana Sahib and Pratap Singh, of whom the last three were illegitimate. Anna Sahib and Nana Sahib died during the lifetime of their father. In 1736 Bava Sahib with the name Tukkoji II succeeded to the throne, but died within a few days of his accession without leaving any issue. Assisted by Said Khan, the Commandant of the forces of Tanjore, Sujana Bai, the widow of Bava Sahib, rose to power. She ruled the country for two years, after which Sahuji captured the throne.[1] But in a short time, a pretender called Siddhoji, claiming himself the cousin of Bava Sahib and gaining the support

[1] T Venkataswamy Row (ed)., *Tanjore District Manual*, vol. 2 (Madras, 1915), p 775.

of Said Khan seized the throne for himself. Sahuji, taken by complete surprise, fled northwards. He crossed River Coleroon and took shelter in the pagoda of Chidambaram. This incident would appear isolated but was of great significance in the history of Tanjore, for it led to the assertion of French interest in the country. He appealed to the French for assistance in the recovery of the kingdom. In return, he offered the cession of Karaikkal and the fort of Kirkangarhi with their dependent villages. Anxious to secure possession of a foothold on the delta of the Kaveri, the French readily accepted the offer. The risk appeared little, for they were called upon to assist an influential prince to return to his throne, while the reward valuable for securing an access into the market. M. Benoit Dumas (1735-1741), the Governor-General of Pondicherry, promptly concluded a settlement with the deputies of Sahuji. He agreed to render financial assistance to the extent of one lakh of rupees, and military aid for the recovery of the throne. Sahuji, on his part, ceded Karaikkal and Kirkangarhi together with their dependent villages to the French Company.

In August 1738 two ships of war, with artillery, troops and war-material sent from Pondicherry reached the shores of Karaikkal. The object no doubt was to take possession of the ceded territory and to assist Sahuji as agreed upon. But the prince, in the meantime, had explored the less expensive means. By distributing money and promising liberal rewards, he won over the nobility including Said Khan. A palace revolution now overthrew Siddhoji from power. Sahuji entered Tanjore in triumph. On the recovery of the kingdom, the prince intimated the French of the turn of events. He not only told them that their aid was no more required but warned them that any attempt to land their forces at Karaikkal would be resisted by force. The disappointment of the French was great, but anxiety to preserve peace prevailed over it. Dumas, in consequence, recalled the expedition.

It was the time when Chanda Sahib, the Nevayet ruler of Trichinopoly, in an attempt to consolidate his power, was exploring the possibilities of alliances. Born of poor parents, but married to the daughter of Dost Ali, Nawab of Arcot, he displayed an ambition to build up his power. Possessing great ability and sagacity, but surrounded by jealous relatives cherishing ambitions equally great as his own, he decided to seek support beyond the circle of his family. Naturally he gave his preference to the amiable French over the complex-minded Anglo-Saxons. The French of Pondicherry, considering the Indians as lords paramount, treated them

with the greatest consideration. They regarded themselves as the best tenants and well-wishers of the natives. Motivated, not by expediency, but by genuine friendship and mutual respect, the two powers drew closer.

Chanda Sahib, now, championed the cause of the French. He informed Dumas that as he was at war with Sahuji, he would occupy Karaikkal and make it over to the French in full sovereignty. Dumas accepted the offer for, he had nothing to lose but everything to gain. Francisco Pereira, a Spaniard in the service of Chanda Sahib, led the cavalry 4,000 strong, on an expedition to Tanjore. The invaders occupied Karaikkal and stormed the fort of Kirkangarhi on the 6th of February, 1739. The overawed Sahuji, now, agreed to make terms.[2] He ceded the occupied territory to the French, but received in return 50,000 pagodas.[3] The ceded territory consisted of the town of Karaikkal, the fortress of Kirkangarhi, ten villages on the seacoast and a tract of territory fifteen to sixteen miles in extent, very fertile in rice, producing cotton and indigo too, and inhabited by 12,000 people.[4] Through the instrumentality of an Indian power the French, thus, made their first territorial acquisition in Tanjore. The alliance of Chanda Sahib with the French, cemented at the expense of Tanjore, was of great implication for the future.

2. British Annexation of Devikottai, 1749

The vicissitudes in the fortunes of Sahuji prepared the ground for British intervention too. Concerned at the growing power of Chanda Sahib in the south, Safdar Ali, the son of Nawab Dost Ali, in a bid to retain his leadership among the Nevayets, to which house he belonged, decided to win Tanjore for himself. In 1739 he invaded Tanjore,[5] imprisoned Sahuji on the pretext that he was

[2] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, pp. 71–78.

[3] Pagoda, a gold coin in circulation during this period, was normally exchanged for three rupees, while a star pagoda for three and a half rupees.

[4] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, p. 80, footnotes.

G. B. Malleson is of the view that on the fall of Karaikkal to Chanda Sahib, Sahuji agreed to execute the treaty of Chidambaram. In the meantime a domestic revolution hurled Sahuji out of power. Pratap Singh, the next ruler, however, confirmed the settlement.

But Ananda Ranga Pillai, whose views appear more authentic as he was Secretary to the French at Pondicherry for long, asserts that Chanda Sahib forced Sahuji to sell Karaikkal to the French for 50,000 pagodas. J. F. Price, (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 1, (Madras, 1904), p. 81.

[5] Hussayn Nainar (ed.), *Tuzak-i-Walajahi*, part I, p. 72.

not of royal blood and offered the throne to Pratap Singh, the illegitimate son of Tukkoji. Thereupon, Sahuji advised his brother: 'If you do not accept the Government; both of us lose our heads, if on the otherhand, we continue alive we may watch the course of events. Hence ascend the throne'.[6] In compliance with this suggestion, Pratap Singh accepted the offer of the invader.

Sahuji sent a request to the Marathas of Poona to liberate Tanjore from the control of Safdar Ali. Concerned at the Mohammadan intervention in a Maratha principality and at the fate of his relation Sahuji, King Sahu gave a favourable response. In fact the king of the Marathas considered the Moghal invasion of Tanjore as a direct violation of the rights of the Marathas. As early as in 1737 he decided to send an expedition to the south but he postponed it because of the fear of Nadir Shah's invasion of India, which took place in 1738.[7] The Marathas of Poona also found in this an opportunity of extending their sway to the far south.[8] In May 1740 the Maratha forces, 50,000 strong, led by Raghuji Bhonsle and Fatteh Singh descended upon the Carnatic. They slew Nawab Dost Ali in the battle at Damalcheruvu. After a prolonged siege, the invaders occupied Trichinopoly in March 1741. Chanda Sahib, taken a prisoner, was carried off to Satara.[9]

In 1740 Sahuji taking advantage of the Maratha invasion, purchased his freedom and regained control of government. However, he did not prove himself acceptable to the country. In 1742 the principal men by their general concurrence replaced him by Pratap Singh.[10] This started in Tanjore an internal struggle which

[6] Accompaniments to Letters from Coromandel, 10 October 1739, Press list of Ancient Dutch Records, p. 26.

[7] Governor Richard Benyon, no date, August 1739, Public Consultations (hereinafter referred to as P.C.), vol. 69, p. 243.

[8] Rajah of Tanjore, letter to Madras Council, received on 9 March 1762, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 64 and S. Radhakrishna Aiyar, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State* (Pudukkottai, 1916), p. 182.

[9] J. F. Price (ed.), *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 1, pp. 161–62.

The Marathas occupied Arcot, but restored it to Safdar Ali upon his promise to pay them one crore of rupees. They appointed Murari Rao, the chief of Gooty, as their governor at Trichinopoly. After their victory over Chanda Sahib they advanced to Tanjore. Pratap Singh agreed to pay one crore of rupees and handed over his principal minister Govinda Rao as security; but stopped payment when the Marathas evacuated his country. The Marathas kept Govinda Rao a close prisoner at Satara for nine years, after which he bribed the guard placed over him and escaped. (Mohammad Ali, 17 July 1762, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C. vol. 10, p. 155)

[10] *Defence of Lord Pigot* (London, 1777), p. 21.

helped Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Arcot, to recover possession of Koilody and Elangad and to levy a contribution. Since his deposition, Sahuji went on knocking at the door of one power after another, exploring means for regaining the throne. He sought the aid of King Sahu and Fatteh Singh, but with no success. Next he approached the Nizam and Nawab Anwar-ud-din, but preoccupied with their own problems, they paid no heed. In 1746 he appealed to the French for aid, promising to cede Devikottai as reward. To the imperialistic Dupleix, the Governor-General of Pondicherry, engaged in war against the English (the First Carnatic war 1746-1748), Devikottai seemed too small a bait.[11]

Eventually Sahuji's entreaties to the English turned fruitful. Charles Floyer, the Governor of Fort St. David, influenced by the accounts of interested persons, Sahuji's assurances that a strong party was still attached to him and was ever ready to take up arms in defence of his rights, offers of concessions including the cession of Devikottai and payment of monetary rewards and, above all, an anxiety to strengthen the Company in opposition to the French, decided to lend support to Sahuji.[12] Expediency and profit motive no doubt decided this British alignment with Sahuji. Support to the prince offered the scope of establishing British influence with the court of Tanjore while possession of Devikottai situated on the bank of the Coleroon held out vast commercial advantages. The river was believed to be capable of receiving ships of the largest tonnage. The sands at the mouth of the Coleroon presented difficulty, but it was felt that these might be removed with little labour and expense.[13] Despite their anxiety to obtain possession of this important foothold, the English did not hesitate to convey an impression that moral principles governed their policy. It was true that inheritance and legitimacy conferred upon Sahuji a definite right to the throne, but he surrendered it to Pratap Singh when he asked the latter to accept the crown from Safdar Ali. The elevation of Pratap Singh at the will of the principal inhabitants confirmed the right which he gained from his elder brother.

British decision to support Sahuji against Pratap Singh started the first phase of the succession-wars in South India. In April 1749 Governor Charles Floyer sent an expedition to Tanjore. Anxious to get quick possession of the promised territory of Devikottai, Captain Cope who commanded the forces, took no trouble

[11] J. F. Price (ed.), *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 1, pp. 355–389.
[12] *Defence of Lord Pigot* (London, 1777), p. 23
[13] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, p. 243, footnotes.

to obtain sufficient knowledge of the country or of the military strength of the Tanjoreans. Early in April the forces consisting of 1,000 sepoys and 430 Europeans left Fort St. David. On the 24th of April the expedition reached the banks of River Vellar. The next day unexpected hurricanes intercepted the march of the forces and deprived them of the co-operation of the fleet. On the 13th of April a violent storm scattered the Company's fleet. In spite of these tribulations, the forces reached the bank of River Coleroon, but on finding that their camp-equippage received much damage, they returned to Portonovo. On the 21st of April after making good the losses and carrying out necessary preparations, they resumed the march.[14] On reaching the bank of the Coleroon, a second time, the British troops found the Tanjoreans posted on the southern bank, ready apparently to intercept their advance. But the forces of Tanjore entertained no intention of fighting, for they hoped to draw the enemy to the direction of Tanjore, to difficult country, in order to administer a deadly blow. The invading forces, however, guided by their anxiety to take possession of Devikottai marched towards that direction, instead of to Tanjore.[15] Captain Cope laid siege to Devikottai, but made no impression upon the garrison, for it appeared more numerous and better equipped than had been anticipated. No ships having arrived, the invaders could procure no provisions and war materials. On the approach of a foreign army the inhabitants, in the meantime, rallied to the support of their king. On the other hand, no man of rank rose in defence of the right of Sahuji. In this predicament that faced the invaders, the Tanjoreans, led by their able general Manoji, launched a counter attack on the British columns and destroyed two of their field pieces. On the 11th of May Captain Cope with his army retreated in consternation to Fort St. David.[16]

In spite of this reverse, the Council of Fort St. David decided to continue the military operations. Though the declared object was to undo the harm done to the rights of Sahuji, the real one was the resentment at having been defeated by an Indian power. Manoji agreed to settle peace, but the revengeful Council of Fort St. David demanded the cession of Devikottai, payment of the ex-

[14] Charles Floyer and Council, 17 April 1749, Fort St. David Consultations, vol. 17, p. 99.

[15] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, pp. 242–243.

[16] Charles Floyer and Council, 26 April 1749, Fort St. David Consultations, vol. 17, p. 105.

penses of the expedition and an annual allowance for Sahuji.[17] Naturally Pratap Singh rejected these humiliating terms. Determined to retrieve the tarnished glory of the British arms, the Council of Fort St. David sent against Tanjore a more powerful army, now under the command of Major Lawrence. It consisted of 1,500 sepoys and 800 Europeans. On the 12th of June 1749 Lawrence made an assault on the fort of Devikottai, but it was repulsed. A second assault turned out successful and the fort fell.[18] The invaders wanted to reduce more posts held by the Tanjoreans, but did not venture to do so as it appeared that further advance would be attended with difficulties, for which they found their strength inadequate. Pratap Singh, on the other hand, wanted to avert further hostilities for fear of wider entanglements. Released from the Maratha prison, Chanda Sahib, whom he regarded as the most dangerous enemy of Tanjore, returned to the Carnatic.[19] Forced by these circumstances, the parties agreed to cessation of the conflict. By the terms of the settlement, the Company withdrew its support from Sahuji but obtained possession of Devikottai.[20]

The Company's expedition to Tanjore marks one of the early European armed interventions in the internal conflicts of South India. It did not develop into a major conflict or merge with the succession disputes in Hyderabad and in the Carnatic, partly because of the spirit of compromise displayed by Pratap Singh and partly because of the refusal of the French to draw themselves to the side of the Rajah as they were preoccupied with disputes of major proportions. The English won no decisive victory over the Tanjoreans, but they secured possession of Devikottai, a com-

[17] Charles Floyer and Council, 22 May 1749, Fort St. David Consultations, vol. 17, p. 143.

[18] Charles Floyer and Council, 4 July 1749, vol. 17, p. 188.

[19] G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, p. 244.

[20] J. Mill, the noted historian in his *The History of British India* [vol. 3 (London, 1858), pp. 60–65] states that the English not only abandoned the cause of Sahuji, but also agreed to deliver him to the king and that Sahuji on hearing the terms of the treaty made his escape from the English camp

This statement is contradicted by the data furnished by official records. In Fort St. David consultations it is stated that the English Council on its own accord granted a monthly allowance of Rs 300 to Sahuji for fear that he would go over to the camp of Chanda Sahib. Besides, when Manoji agreed to make terms, the English asked him to make a provision for the support of the deposed prince. (Charles Floyer and Council, 4 December 1749, vol. 17, p. 143). At their instance Pratap Singh granted a life pension of Rs 4,000 a year. (G. B. Malleson, *History of the French in India*, p. 244).

mercial town. Sahuji, whom they supported and deserted passed into political oblivion.

3. Chanda Sahib's Expedition

In October 1749 another phase of conflict—more significant than the Tanjore war of succession—commenced as the result of the outbreak of succession disputes in Hyderabad and the Carnatic. In 1748, on the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Nasir Jang, his second son, assumed power at Hyderabad. But Muzaffar Jang, the favourite grandson of the late Nizam, contested the throne for himself. In the same year Chanda Sahib, released by the Marathas from Satara, appeared as a rival to Nawab Anwar-ud-din in the Carnatic. The French, Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang entered into a close alliance for the purpose of effecting a revolution in their favour both at Hyderabad and Arcot. Their combined forces defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din at Ambur in 1749. Mohammad Ali, the son of the fallen Nawab, thereupon, fled Ambur for Trichinopoly, where he was governor, for safety. The confederates, now, decided to storm Trichinopoly. Their task appeared difficult primarily because of the natural strength of the fort. Still, certain circumstances favoured their scheme, Mohammad Ali had neither the time nor the resources to assemble any formidable force. The English evinced no definite interest in the plight of this Wallajah prince, for they were busy in mobilising their scanty resources for improving and garrisoning Fort St. George, restored by the French on the 21st of August 1749 under the terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.[21] Quick action was deemed highly essential to exploit these circumstances to their advantage. Yet, partly because of their financial embarrassment and partly because of a lack of urgency and vision, the French and their allies drifted into a conflict with Tanjore.

They directed Pratap Singh to furnish financial as well as military aid for the reduction of Trichinopoly. The requisition from the opposite camp, for Mohammad Ali too requested aid—together with uncertainty about final outcome of the struggle placed the Rajah in a peculiar dilemma. Pratap Singh evaded a direct reply,[22] but Chanda Sahib, as a next step, insisted upon the payment

[21] Thomas Saunders, 4 September 1749, letter to Mohammad Ali, P.C.C., vol. 3, p. 34.

[22] Rajah Tuljaji, 29 January 1778, letter to Court of Directors, M.C.C., vol. 27, pp. 81–116.

of one crore of rupees and the cession of more villages near Karaikkal to the French.[23] As the prospect of any settlement appeared remote, the threat of war loomed large. The Rajah assembled an army of 4,000 horse and 30,000 foot and secured the service of 500 English and Dutch troops, but found it impossible to expel the invaders. Chanda Sahib, in retaliation, blockaded the fort of Tanjore. He set fire to the houses, plundered the country and destroyed the water-courses.[24] The object of the expedition was to force the Rajah into a settlement, but not to storm the fort, as the latter course amounted to an open breach of faith which Sahu, King of the Marathas and a relative of Pratap Singh, placed on Chanda Sahib when he sanctioned his release from the prison at Satara. But on hearing the death of Sahu which occurred on the 15th of December, Chanda Sahib decided to attack the fort; still he hesitated as he felt that if the fort were taken by storm, the troops could not be prevented from plundering the supposedly hoarded treasures. Therefore, in an attempt to secure a capitulation of the fort, the invaders continued the siege, but it lingered on. After three months' resistance, Pratap Singh agreed to a settlement by which he consented to pay seventy lakhs of rupees, of which he gave a bond for fifty-six lakhs and paid the rest in ready cash to Chanda Sahib. Besides, he made a donation of 6,60,000 to the French native army led by Abdul Rahman,[25] and ceded 250 villages around Karaikkal, in addition to what Sahuji parted with.[26] These payments and grants covered the war expenses of the allies as well as the arrears of tribute which Chanda Sahib claimed as due from Tanjore.[27] Yet, their gains seemed ephemeral for, after a long siege, they had to satisfy themselves with a small cash payment. The French no doubt acquired a territorial concession.

After wasting several months and frittering away their resources on conflicts with the Tanjoreans, the French and their

[23] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 6 (Madras, 1918), p. 27.

[24] Rajah Pratap Singh, 30 May 1763, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 11, pp. 196–197.

[25] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 6, pp. 362-400.

[26] Rajah Pratap Singh, 1 January 1754, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 2, p. 61.

[27] Mohammad Ali, letter to Madras Council, received on 16th May 1778, M.C.C., vol. 9, p. 103.

allies decided to march on Trichinopoly. By then, Nasir Jang with a large army descended upon Arcot, upholding the rights of Mohammad Ali. Afraid that they would be caught in the rear, the French and Chanda Sahib suspended the projected expedition to Trichinopoly. In an attempt to convert the fort of Tanjore into a place of shelter, they laid siege to it but the Tanjoreans repulsed their attacks. Finding that the time was running short, the invaders raised the siege and withdrew in a hurry to Pondicherry.[28] The French and Nevayet operations in Tanjore not only left Mohammad Ali safe at Trichinopoly but gave him time to organise his defences.

After Nasir Jang evacuated the Carnatic, the French and Chanda Sahib marched on Trichinopoly a second time. In March 1751 the French engaged the English in a series of battles, but gained no victory. In the middle of the siege of Trichinopoly, the French forces led by De Auteuil, withdrew to the northern bank of the Kaveri.[29] Disappointed at the attitude of the French, Chanda Sahib sought to force an alliance with Tanjore. By threat of attack and offer of rewards, he tried to obtain the services of the Tanjoreans, but Pratap Singh remained firm in his alliance with the English. Angered at the attitude of the Rajah, the Nevayet forces, invaded Tanjore and occupied the districts of Tiruvarur, Mannargudy and Kumbakonam. These depredations prevented

[28] Rajah Tuljaji, 27 January 1778, letter to Court of Directors, M.C.C., vol. 27, pp. 81-117.

Perhaps because of his inability to obtain relevant information for consultation, M. Wilks has arrived at wrong conclusions. According to him Tanjore was saved from capture by the deceitful wiles of Pratap Singh. He says that Chanda Sahib suffered himself to be amused by absurd and inefficient military measures and negotiations, which the Rajah who knew that Nasir Jang was approaching from Golconda and had already arrived in the territories of Mysore; broke off, renewed and skilfully protracted till that chief had actually entered the province of Arcot. He proceeds: Such was the security and improvidence of Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib that this intelligence was first conveyed to them by Dupleix and that the contemptible proceedings before Tanjore ended in a still more disgraceful retreat. [M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South India* (Madras, 1869), vol. 1, p. 162].

This statement is disproved by the mere fact that the Rajah purchased peace by agreeing to pay seventy lakhs of rupees. Besides, the letter of Governor Thomas Saunders to Mohammad Ali makes it clear that Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang already knew the approach of Nasir Jang even before their invasion of Tanjore (P.C.C., vol. 3, p. 34).

[29] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 8 (Madras, 1922), pp. 61–62.

the Rajah from extending any substantial assistance to Mohammad Ali.[30]

In September 1751 the English and Mohammad Ali, assisted by Tanjore and Mysore, commenced a powerful offensive against the French. In these actions, the forces of Tanjore consisting of 3,000 horse and 2,000 foot led by Manoji, rendered energetic support to the cause which the English upheld. In his predicament Chanda Sahib made another attempt to seek the alliance of Tanjore, but Pratap Singh turned it down.[31] Having defeated the French in a series of battles, the forces of Mohammad Ali and his allies surrounded the camp of Chanda Sahib. Attempts made to effect an escape having proved futile, Chanda Sahib made a last minute settlement with Manoji. He promised to pay the Tanjoreans a sum of money for their conducting him disguised as a fakir in safety to the French settlement of Karaikkal. Jacques Law, the French General, demanded Manoji to assure on oath the safety of Chanda Sahib, but the Tanjore general did it by proxy, by sending Daud Khan who swore on the Qoran to that effect. The French general, therefore, asked Manoji for a hostage to remain with the French until Chanda Sahib reached Karaikkal, but this was refused. Still, as there was no other alternative, Chanda Sahib surrendered to Manoji.[32] The same day of surrender, Manoji held a secret conference with Major Lawrence and other chiefs and decided the fate of the victim. On the 17th of June 1752, Chanda Sahib was executed.[33]

[30] Manoji of Tanjore, letter to Madras Council, received on 3rd August, 1751, P.C.C., vol. 4, p. 49.

When Chanda Sahib sought the alliance of Tanjore, Saunders cautioned the Rajah that he had heard of a snake that charmed the birds into its mouth and devoured them. (Thomas Saunders, 14th October 1751, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, P.C.C., vol. 4, p. 127). But Pratap Singh replied that he was not afraid of a serpent when he had 'Garuda,' (a kind of kite and on its sight the serpent loses its strength and sometimes dies or if the bird sees kills it.) (Pratap Singh, letter to Madras Council, received on 22nd November 1751, P.C.C., vol. 4, p. 74).

[31] Manoji of Tanjore, letter to Madras Council, received on 22nd November 1751, P.C.C., vol. 4, pp. 73-74.

[32] H. Dodwell, *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 8, pp. 111-115.

[33] M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India* (Madras, 1869), Part I, p. 177.

Versions differ on the real responsibility for the execution of Chanda Sahib. No doubt most of the chiefs connived at it. Mark Wilks asserts that it was done at the instigation of Mohammad Ali. But Dupleix held Major

British alliance with Mohammad Ali acted detrimentally to the Nawab's sovereignty over Tanjore. The bitter rivalry of the Wallajahs with the Nevayets and French engaged so much of their attention, that they ignored British intervention in Tanjore, though they claimed it as a vassal-state of the Carnatic. As a result, the British interest in the kingdom began almost simultaneously with the establishment of Wallajah influence. Had not the Nevayets preoccupied the Wallajahs, the logical sequence of British intervention in Tanjore would have turned the Wallajahs hostile to the English. But this did not happen partly because of external threat and partly due to their alliance. Added to amicable relations with the English, geographical location had partly governed the attitude of Tanjore. Pressed by the compelling necessity of supporting that ruler who held possession of Trichinopoly—for it was in his power to ruin the agriculture of Tanjore by diverting the waters from the Kaveri to the Coleroon at a narrow neck of land at Koilody—Pratap Singh entered into the service of Mohammad Ali. Added to this, the hostile policy adopted by Chanda Sahib in the past and expeditions conducted in collaboration with the French rendered a Nevayet-Tanjorean alliance impossible.

4. Conflict with Mysore

A revolution in party alignment and renewal of conflict at Trichinopoly in October 1752 placed Tanjore in a peculiar dilemma. In return for the services rendered by Mysore for the overthrow of Chanda Sahib, Mohammad Ali had promised the cession of Trichinopoly. But on gaining victory, he flatly refused to honour the solemn pledge. In frustration, Mysore entered into an alliance with Murari Rao and commenced hostilities against Mohammad Ali and his ally, the English. The French joined the camp of the Mysoreans. In an attempt to capture Trichinopoly, the forces of Mysore supported by the French and Murari Rao, instituted a close blockade upon the fort.

The belligerents made a strenuous effort to win the alliance of Tanjore as it was of capital importance to either side. To the

Lawrence as directly responsible. (M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, Part I, p. 177).

In fact, the primary responsibility for this treachery rested with Manoji. The Tanjorean general assured the safety of Chanda Sahib, but his refusal to give a hostage indicated that he had second thoughts over the fate of the defeated chief. In his letter to Nandi Rajah in 1752, Rajah Pratap Singh asserted that Manoji without his knowledge cut off the head of Chanda Sahib. (Military Consultations, 30 December 1752, vol. 1, p. 263).

French it was primarily essential for keeping the communication with Karaikkal open and to the Nawab for obtaining provisions. Dupleix offered the restoration of Karaikkal and cession of a district of Trichinopoly yielding an annual revenue of ten lakhs of rupees as the price of Tanjore's alliance, but Pratap Singh took no notice of the proposal.[34] Mohammad Ali, on the other hand, sent his emissaries to Tanjore with an offer to cede the district of Vriddhachalam, adjoining the northern boundary of the kingdom, yet the Rajah preferred neutrality.[35] Subsequently, the Nawab and Major Lawrence on their way from Arcot to Trichinopoly halted at Tanjore, persuaded the Rajah to join the coalition and offered the cession of the provinces of Madurai and Tinnevelly—an offer that was not fulfilled—in return for his co-operation.[36] Persuaded by the appeals and offers and considering the necessity of friendly relations with the English and the dependence of his country's agricultural prosperity upon the good neighbourliness of Trichinopoly, the Rajah entered into the contest on the side of the Nawab. The alliance of Tanjore gave a decisive military superiority to the Wallajahs over the Mysoreans.

In January 1753 the combined forces of the Nawab, Major Lawrence, and Pratap Singh with a large convoy of stores from Tanjore made a successful entry into the fort of Trichinopoly.[37] On the 9th a strong body of the Marathas and the French sought to intercept the convoy; but Lawrence dispersed the enemy in several smart encounters.[38] The blockade of the fort collapsed. Nandi Rajah, the chief of Mysore, and his allies now ravaged Tanjore in revenge. Murari Rao's troops made frequent incursions into the state, killed numerous inhabitants, set fire to the temple chariots, defiled the pagodas and desolated the towns. As the Rajah sent away most of his troops to Trichinopoly, he found it impossible to protect his own people. At random the Marathas roamed at large into the Arcot country in pursuit of their favourite game of plunder.[39] However, neither the French nor the

[34] Thomas Saunders, 2 February 1754, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 1, p. 67.

[35] Mohammad Ali, letter to Madras Council, received on 23 January 1755, M.C.C., vol. 1, p. 11.

[36] Pratap Singh, letter to Madras Council, received on 9 March 1762, M.C.C., vol. 10, pp. 64-69.

[37] Mohammad Ali, 15 August 1753, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 1, p. 214.

[38] Thomas Saunders in Council, 15 January 1753, M.C., vol. 2, p. 34.

[39] Pratap Singh, letter to Madras Council, received on 17 May 1753, M.C.C., vol. 1, pp. 105-108.

Mysoreans made any determined effort to capture Tanjore. If that had been done, it could have made a diversion in their favour at Trichinopoly.

In May 1753 the Wallajah forces assisted by the Tanjoreans and the English started offensive operations. On the 10th Major Lawrence crossed the Kaveri and charged a body of the Mysoreans led by Hari Singh. Notwithstanding, he was obliged to retreat in the face of a counter-attack launched by Nandi Rajah and M. Astruc. Nandi Rajah followed up this victory with the reduction of the forward posts set up by the Nawab's forces. On the 26th M. Astruc attacked a post established by Major Lawrence on the summits of the Golden Rock situated near the fort. While the operation was in progress, Major Lawrence with a select band of troops approached the post undiscovered, routed the Mysoreans and took the rock. After suffering this debacle the Mysoreans and the French again retreated to Srirangam.[40]

At this critical hour Nandi Rajah and Dupleix made another bid to win the alliance of Tanjore, failing which to neutralise the kingdom. By promises, bribes, intrigues and threats they, in fact, succeeded in detaching the Rajah from the coalition so well that Pratap Singh not only did not send his forces again for service with the Nawab but replaced Manoji, his general, on account of his pro-Wallajah proclivities by Gauderow. Therefore, Saunders sent his emissary Robert Palk to Tanjore to prevail upon the Rajah, in consequence of which the vacillating Pratap Singh sent further assistance.[41]

As the Rajah returned to his alliance with the Nawab, the Mysoreans and the French resumed incursions into his country. As usual they killed the inhabitants, ravished the women and destroyed the towns. These freebooting operations rendered the fate of the people, already affected by the turmoils of the last seven years, really pathetic.[42] Murari Rao administered a devastating blow to the Tanjoreans in a battle at Koilody. He defeated Gauderow, killed 500 of his men and broke down the great dam on the Kaveri.[43] On hearing this disaster, Mohammad Ali and Lawrence in May 1754 marched to the rescue of the Rajah. They

[40] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 9 (Madras, 1924), Introduction, p. 1 and M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, Part 1, pp. 185-197.

[41] Thomas Saunders in Council, 25 February 1754, M.C., vol. 3, p. 55.

[42] Pratap Singh, letter to Madras Council, received on 17 May 1753, M.C.C., vol. 1, pp. 105-108.

[43] Thomas Saunders in Council, 3 June 1754, M.C., vol. 3, pp. 126-128.

paid a visit to Pratap Singh who was seen frightened at the shattering reprisals of the enemy and concerted means for liberating the country from the throes of chaos. They requested the Rajah to explore the possibility of a settlement with the opposite camp and to persuade his fellow Maratha-chief Murari Rao to quit the alliance with Mysore. The Nawab consented to pay whatever sum Pratap Singh advanced to Murari Rao for the attainment of the purpose. Subsequently, the Rajah sent another army under the command of Manoji for service with the Nawab and entered into correspondence with Murari Rao.[44]

5. Withdrawal of the Marathas and the French from War

Pratap Singh sought to detach Murari Rao from the latter's alliance with Nandi Rajah at an appropriate moment. No unity appeared to have existed among the hostile powers. Dupleix was agitated as nothing concrete could be achieved so far. He attributed the failure of his efforts to his allies, especially the Marathas.[45] On the other hand, Murari Rao charged that the French lacked enterprise and that they never extended any active co-operation to Nandi Rajah. He blamed Dupleix for having no well-defined scheme of military operations.[46] These mutual accusations attain momen-

[44] Mohammad Ali, December 1753, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., Rajah Tuljaji, 29 January 1776, letter to Court of Directors, M.C.C., vol. 27, pp. 81-117, and vol. 2, p. 6.

[45] Dupleix complained that though he spent about fifteen lakhs of rupees on Murari Rao's forces during the seven months ending with May 1753, nothing was accomplished. (H. Dodwell, ed., *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 8, pp. 375-376).

[46] A letter of Murari Rao written to Dupleix in July 1753 conveys his impression about the policy of Dupleix and the character of the French. It runs thus: "You should undertake only one affair at a time; but you indiscreetly seek to finish all affairs in different places at the same time. How can you do this when the enemy is growing strong? You must send troops to one place only, and when you have succeeded there, you may send them elsewhere. How can you hope to succeed everywhere at once? First you tell me to march against Arcot, then against Trichinopoly, then against Devikottai, and then against Chidambaram and Vriddhachalam. If you write thus where can I go and how can affairs prosper? My coming has cost you money; but I have lost good sardars, my younger brothers and many men, without succeeding at any point. If you will pay my expenses, I will go. Your Europeans are useless". (*The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 8, p. 378). This letter indicates how the frequent interference of Dupleix in the details of military operations and the want of a spirit of co-operation among the French contributed to their reverses.

tum generally in a dark hour of frustration. Pratap Singh wisely exploited the discontent in the camp of Nandi Rajah and settled terms with Murari Rao. Accordingly, the Maratha general agreed to evacuate the Carnatic in return for the payment of three lakhs of rupees. Pratap Singh, on his part, consented to advance, on behalf of the Nawab, three lakhs of rupees in three instalments—half a lakh on Murari Rao leaving Trichinopoly, one lakh on his moving beyond the limits of the Carnatic and the rest on his arriving at Gooty.

Soon after the terms were settled, Murari Rao disclosed the state of negotiation to Nandi Rajah, but offered to continue in service on payment of more money. Anxious to retain his services, Nandi Rajah immediately advanced half a lakh of rupees to the Maratha chief and promised to pay him more. But Murari Rao, who valued money more than loyalty, deserted the camp of Mysore on the 11th of May 1754. He received the first instalment from Pratap Singh. Moving at ease all over the country along the northern bank of the Kaveri, levying contributions and plundering the villages, he collected as much money as he could. Finally in July he took a northern route.[47] The withdrawal of Murari Rao, on the one hand, curtailed the striking power of Mysore and, on the other, left Tanjore free from his ravages. Nandi Rajah, received another blow when the French too decided to withdraw from the war. Godeheu, who replaced Dupleix as Governor-General of the French in India, made peace with the English by the Treaty of Pondicherry in January 1755. The withdrawal of the French and the English from the conflict brought down the intensity of the struggle. In April 1755 Nizam Salabat Jang's expedition to Mysore gave a quick remedy to the military problem that confronted Nandi Rajah. On urgent appeal from Mysore for succour, Nandi Rajah evacuated Trichinopoly with a mixed feeling—consternation at the failure of his mission coupled with a consolation at his getting relief from a hopeless task. It was an irony of his fate that he could be of no service to Mysore either, for before his arrival the Nizam defeated the Rajah and exacted a large contribu-

[47] Thomas Saunders, 11 October 1754, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 2, p. 339 and M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, Part 1, pp. 202-206.

Murari Rao withdrew from his alliance with Mysore partly because he found no prospect of victory and partly because the Nawab of Kadappa made encroachments upon his territory of Gooty in his absence. (Thomas Saunders in Council, 18 July 1754, M.C., vol. 3, p. 161).

tion of fifty-two lakhs of rupees. Nevertheless, the end of the war left Tanjore free from its ordeal.[48]

6. Isolation of the Marawars

Free from the military operations at Trichinopoly, Pratap Singh decided to extend his sway over the Marawa states of Ramnad and Sivaganga. Hanumantgudi served as the bone of contention. Originally a Marawa territory, it was occupied by Tanjore, but the Marawa rulers reoccupied and divided it between themselves when Pratap Singh had been embroiled in the war against the French at Trichinopoly. Determined to recover possession of the territory, Pratap Singh in February 1755 entered into an alliance with the Tondaiman of Pudukkottai against the Marawars. Mohammad Ali, on the other hand, anxious to secure the services of the Tanjoreans for the suppression of the rebels of Madurai and to prevent the annexation of the Marawa states with Tanjore, asked the Rajah to postpone the execution of his design.[49] Still, Manoji without any hesitation commanded the expedition. He attacked Hanumantgudi, but Vellaiyan Servaikaran, the talented general of Ramnad, taking the command of the combined forces of the Marawa states repulsed the Tanjorean invasions.[50] In May 1755 Manoji led another powerful army to the south. This time he defeated the Marawa troops and took possession of a part of the district of Hanumantgudi. The Madras Council, now solicitous of ending the hostilities, sent John Caillaud to Hanumantgudi for persuading the Tanjoreans to withdraw from the Marawar territory and to assist the Nawab's troops in the settlement of Madurai.[51] Pratap Singh, accordingly, recalled the expedition.

Nevertheless the repeated aggressions by the Tanjoreans convinced the Marawa rulers of their folly of remaining isolated. Eager to strengthen their position, they offered to enter into an alliance with the Nawab and the English Company. The Setupati of Ramnad and the Rajah of Sivaganga paid a visit to Alexander Heron, the commander of Company's forces, at Madurai. They agreed to furnish 5,000 of their troops for service with the Nawab and to cede two seaports to the English as the price of the accept-

[48] Lord Pigot in Council, 12 June 1755, M.C., vol. 4, p. 92, and H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 9, p. 260.

[49] Lord Pigot in Council, 26 March 1755, M.C., vol. 4, pp. 49-50.

[50] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 9, p. 260.

[51] Lord Pigot in Council, 4 June 1755, M.C., vol. 4, p. 89.

ance of their alliance.[52] Maphuz Khan, the Nawab's brother and Alexander Heron, the British general accepted the offer. But the rulers of Tanjore and Pudukkottai, embittered by their animosity towards the Marawa rulers, vehemently opposed this alliance. In an attempt to thwart the scheme, they even entered into a plot with the rebels of Madurai for the overthrow of the Nawab's authority over Trichinopoly.[53] No doubt they aimed at a drastic step, but their ability to accomplish it was open to doubt. Still it helped them to achieve what they wanted. Lord Pigot (1755-1763), the successor of Saunders in the Presidency of Fort St. George, not only repudiated the settlement but directed the rulers of Ramnad and Sivaganga to restore the territories of Tanjore as the prerequisite to their seeking alliance with the Company.[54]

The attempt made by the Marawars, though turned futile, was an indication of their recognition of the threat they faced as the result of the growing influence of Tanjore in alliance with the Nawab and the English. Allies of the Nayaks of Madurai and the Nevayets of Arcot, they were left without support after the fall of these powers. Their isolation exposed them to the Tanjorean aggression. It was natural, therefore, that they sought new allies for self-preservation. Tanjore and Pudukkottai, on the other hand, for fear that the proposed alliance would block their expansion, thwarted the realisation of the Marawars' objective. The rejection of their offer drove them to a state of animosity and subsequently into an alliance with the Dutch. They granted commercial rights to the Dutch and permission to construct a factory at Kilkarai.

7. Victory over Count de Lally

Tanjore experienced another phase of turmoil, when the English and the French fought the Third Carnatic War (1756-1763). France sent a powerful armament under the command of Count de Lally for the suppression of the English in India. In April 1758 the French army arrived at Pondicherry. Promptly it reduced the British settlements of Fort St. David and Devikottai. The capture of Madras appeared as a matter of urgent necessity but the French general pressed by financial embarrassment, as Dupleix did, marched on Tanjore. His specific object was to recover the amount of the deed which Pratap Singh had given to

[52] T. Rajaram Row (ed.), *Ramnad District Manual* (Madras, 1933), p. 238.

[53] Lord Pigot in Council, 22 and 24 April 1755, M.C., vol. 4, pp. 72-73.

[54] Lord Pigot in Council, 25 May 1755, vol. 4, p. 84.

Chanda Sahib for fifty-six lakhs of rupees but transferred to the French by Reza Sahib in lieu of the expenses incurred for the wars of the Nevayets.[55] Another object of Lally was to enthrone Galica, an uncle of Sahuji, as he felt it essential to establish French influence in Tanjore. Lally obtained the military aid of the Marawars and secured equipment of war from the Danes of Tranquebar and the Dutch of Negapattam.[56]

In June the French commenced military operations on a large scale. The Tondiaman of Pudukkottai surrendered to the invaders. Lally captured Nagore, from where he advanced to Kiveloor, a place reputed for its temple. Believing that the idols worshipped by the Hindus were of gold, the French ransacked the temple buildings and dragged the tanks; brought out some solid gods, but saw them of brass. Next, the French took Tiruvarur, noted for another famous temple. The servants of the temple fled, but a few days later they were seen prying and making queries in the French camp, perhaps due to their anxiety for the security of their gods. Lally, taking them as spies of the Rajah, rashly blew them off. Pratap Singh, now more worried about the safety of lifeless gods than the security of his subjects, sent his emissaries to sue for peace, but Lally summarily dismissed them as they offered no substantial concessions.

As the prospect of restoring peace dwindled, Manoji decided on vigorous resistance. Taking the command of 2,500 horse and 5,000 foot—half of the Tanjore army—he encamped near Tiruvarur. He appealed to the Nawab, Madras Council, Tondaiman and Marawa kings for aid, but only the English sent 810 men,—a very small number indeed—from Trichinopoly.[57]

The French continued their offensive. They swept off numerous posts and on the 18th of July encamped within six miles of the capital. The Rajah again treated for a peaceful settlement. Lally demanded the full payment of fifty-six lakhs of rupees with interest, but Pratap Singh pleaded his inability to pay anything more than three lakhs. The French general now sent word through his deputies to the Rajah asking him to pay one million rupees and to supply 600 bullocks and 10,000 pounds of gun-powder. The emissaries did as was directed except about gun-powder, for

[55] S. Radha Krishna Aiyar, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State*, p. 218.

[56] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 11 (Madras, 1928), pp. 192-193.

[57] Robert Orme, *History of Indostan*, vol. 2 (Madras, 1861), pp. 318-322.

fear of revealing a secret. The king, thereupon, agreed to pay four lakhs of rupees but expressed his inability to supply the bullocks for fear of violating the Hindu custom. In a second conference the deputies, at the positive instructions of Lally, insisted upon the supply of gun-powder too; upon which Manoji, understanding how hollow the French threat was, terminated the negotiations. The French occupied the suburbs of the city and threatened the fort. Alarmed at the prospect of an assault upon his capital, the Rajah renewed the negotiations and made a settlement by which he agreed to pay seven and a half lakhs of rupees and to furnish 500 horse and 1,000 foot in addition to provisions.[58]

Pratap Singh sent a few horses and two hostages as security for the payment of money to the French camp, but delayed the implementation of the rest of the terms. The temperamental Lally, imagining that the Rajah intended to amuse him, shut up the Tanjoreans who had already arrived at his camp. Driven to suspicion and dreading the real intentions of the French, Pratap Singh now refused to send the rest of the men. A deputy of Lally charged the Rajah for the supposed breach of faith, but mutual explanations partially cleared the doubts. The French deputy left the camp of Tanjore agreeing to return with one of the hostages for establishing that the Tanjoreans were safe, but Lally and his council of war hurriedly concluded that the stipulation amounted to indignity. The hostilities were resumed; upon which the French threatened not only to destroy the whole kingdom but to enslave the entire royal family. The magnitude of the danger naturally stiffened the Tanjorean resistance.

On the 2nd of August the French batteries began to break the walls of the fort. After five days of continuous fire, a breach was made. Lally decided to storm the fort at 3 o'clock in the early morning of the 9th. But the Tanjoreans, getting wind of it in time, frustrated the design of the enemy by a daring stratagem. In the midnight of the 9th, they sallied out in full force, vigorously charged the French camp from two directions and killed 600 of their European troops besides numerous sepoys. Lally escaped with his life very narrowly. The French fled in utter confusion in a northern direction, followed by the Tanjore-horse up to Nadavasal, after which they retreated to Pondicherry.[59] The French expedition to Tanjore thus ended in total discomfiture.

[58] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 11, p. 240.
[59] H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, vol. 11, p. 253 and Robert Orme, *History of Indostan*, vol. 2, pp. 322-327.

It was an irony of fate that the Tanjore expedition was to Lally what it was to Dupleix in French-Indian History. History at times repeats itself. Pressed by financial embarrassment, Dupleix and Chanda Sahib decided upon the Tanjore adventure; but in executing their schemes, they missed the opportunity of assaulting Trichinopoly. Nevertheless, they exacted a bond from the King of Tanjore. The pecuniary difficulty prevailed upon Lally too to undertake an expedition to Tanjore—obviously to realise the amount of the bond; but he failed not only in Tanjore but lost an opportunity of storming Fort St. George. After the futile wars in Tanjore both Dupleix and Lally struggled hard to reach their respective destinations, but they attained neither the temporary gain nor the ultimate goal. The shield of protection unwittingly extended by Tanjore, however small a power it was, to the British Empire in South India against the assaults by Count de Lally not only demoralised the aggressor but contributed to the demolition of the French Empire by the English.

8. Effect on Diplomacy

The English established their relations with Tanjore by 1749 in competition with the French. These European powers asserted their influence more as political powers than as commercial, for each of them acquired territory from the kingdom. Two factors, in particular, invited European intervention: the civil conflict in Tanjore and the threat of Moghal invasions. The vicissitudes in the fortunes of Sahuji proved beneficial to western interests. His conflict with Siddhoji forced him to cede Karaikkal to the French while his struggle against Pratap Singh made him offer Devikottai to the English. Neither the French nor the English helped Sahuji in regaining the throne. Nor had they won any decisive victory over Tanjore. Still the threat of Moghal invasion left the country with no alternative but to cede its territories. Sahuji surrendered Karaikkal because of Chanda Sahib's invasion while Pratap Singh ceded Devikottai because of the possibility of Moghal incursion. In fact, the European powers made territorial gains by taking advantage of the stresses and strains experienced by the country. The Carnatic claimed sovereignty over Tanjore, but distracted by civil disorders, made no attempt to challenge European intrusion.

The European acquisition of territories from Tanjore had its impact upon the alliance systems which were in the making. The cession of Karaikkal to the French at the instance of Chanda Sahib undermined the prestige of Tanjore while it strengthened the friendship between the former powers. Pratap Singh trans-

ferred Devikottai to the English, but the support he won against Sahuji led to the establishment of friendly relations between Tanjore and the English Company. These alliance systems embroiled Tanjore in the wars that followed.

The entanglement of these alliance systems in the power politics of South India deprived the European powers of the opportunity to follow up the gains they acquired. The French entered into an alliance with Chanda Sahib and the English with Mohammad Ali. Their struggle for the possession of the Carnatic ensured the survival of the principality. Had Chanda Sahib retained control of Madurai, he would have sought the annexation of Tanjore. In the absence of any definite undertaking by the English, it was doubtful that the country would have received any assistance from this European power. Had Mohammad Ali won the undisputed authority over the Carnatic, Tanjore awaited the same possibility. But a conflict between these powers, with the European powers drawn into it, averted any immediate threat to the kingdom.

Two alternatives presented themselves when hostilities broke out in the Carnatic; to observe neutrality or to join the war. To a small country, rich in resources but weak in military power, unaided by any major power and unsupported by any definite understanding between the belligerent powers to that effect, neutrality appeared a risky job. Had the vulnerable Tanjore attempted this course, it was susceptible to violations during the war and the country would have invited its doom at the hands of the victorious powers at the end of the conflict. To enter the war meant joining the camp of one side or the other. Here the choice appeared limited, for it was a choice between two evils. Both the English and the French wrested territories from Tanjore. Mohammad Ali as well as Chanda Sahib invaded the country in the past and levied contributions. The success of any power in the war seemed immaterial, for the fate of Tanjore seemed anything but sealed as its very existence worked against the trend towards the unification of the Carnatic. The difference seemed only in terms of time. While an alliance with the defeated power meant a possible immediate extinction, that with the victorious power meant a later but the same fate. It was certain, the Nawab of the Carnatic would never have tolerated the independence of the principality for long.

Still Pratap Singh took his country into an alliance with the English and Mohammad Ali. This was because he wanted to consolidate his friendship with the English in his attempt to

thwart the machinations of his rivals, particularly Sahuji. Mohammad Ali held control over the upper reaches of the Kaveri. His friendship appeared essential in order to dissuade him from diverting the waters from the streams that flowed into the fields of Tanjore to the Coleroon. In fact obligation as well as expediency dictated the policy of the state.

However, it cannot be denied that Tanjore made little gain out of its alliances. Pratap Singh not only took no advantage of the critical situations which faced his allies but made no capital out of the services he rendered to them for winning major victories. Never did he attempt to consolidate his grip over the English or Mohammad Ali so as to set the stage for wresting substantial concessions for his country. Neither did he recover Karaikkal and Devikottai nor did he win recognition of the independence of Tanjore. He did not acquire Vriddhachalam and Madurai for his kingdom, though were offered by Mohammad Ali. The failure to define his objective except to support his allies whenever called upon to do so and to set a higher vision before his eyes than the acquisition of Koilody and Elangad and a concession in tribute accounted for these diplomatic reverses of Pratap Singh.

The outbreak of war between Mysore and the Carnatic, with the French and the English taking opposite sides, presented a historic opportunity to Pratap Singh, but he missed this too. Whether Chanda Sahib had won or Mohammad Ali did, Tanjore faced a definite threat to its survival. But a victory of Mysore offered an alternative. Exhausted by the long war, deprived of the supply of provisions and dependent on Tanjore for communications, the English would have found it an insuperable task to defend Trichinopoly against Nandi Rajah supported by Pratap Singh. The economic resources and the military power of Tanjore offered the possibility to them of turning the scales in favour of Mysore. A successful Nandi Rajah would have annexed Madurai, it was true, but Tanjore too would have shared the booty with this amiable ally while a clash of interests between Arcot and Mysore would have ensured the independence of Tanjore. Yet the King of Tanjore took no notice of this prospect. Perhaps his ambition to annex the Marawa states blurred his vision. A liberal and imaginative policy suggested a reconciliation with the smaller states and alliance with the military chieftains called the poligars and the utilisation of their support for gaining major concessions from the contestants. Instead, Pratap Singh wielded the limited influence he gained over the English against the Marawars, isolated them and drove them to hostility.

The Anglo-Saxons were clever and cunning. They made alliance with Sahuji but left him in the lurch; yet they acquired Devikottai from Tanjore. They drew the support from the state yet made no offers. Tanjore joined the war not as a vassal of the Carnatic but as an ally of the English Company in consequence of the understanding made on the cession of Devikottai. Naturally the English utilised the services rendered by Tanjore not only to tighten their grip over the Nawab but to consolidate their influence over the country. The subsequent identification of British interests with the Nawab's acted detrimentally to the interests of Tanjore. The English made capital out of the signal victory won by Tanjore over the French. The reverses of Count de Lally in Tanjore not only gave time to the English for the consolidation of their defences but helped them to shatter the French dream of building up an empire in South India.

Chapter II

BRITISH-WALLAJAH COLLUSION

Free from any external threat, the English diverted their resources, both diplomatic and military, for the consolidation of their influence on the coast. The long war at Trichinopoly ultimately went to their benefit, for it initiated a process of elimination of powers, both enemies and allies, from the political scene. The French, Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang passed into oblivion. When the victory over the French was accomplished the English and the Wallajahs forged a union against their principal ally, Mysore. Nandi Rajah too was vanquished. Next it was the turn of Tanjore. Exhausted by long service to their ally, the Anglo-Saxons, Tanjore fell an easy victim to their machinations with the Wallajahs.

The King of Tanjore was the most powerful figure among the princes, over whom Mohammad Ali had any claim of superiority. The Rajah entertained an ambition—as it was natural for any subordinate prince—not only to assert his complete independence, but to expand his territory. During the Anglo-French wars, the kingdom under Pratap Singh successfully maintained its independence, primarily because of the unsettled state of affairs in the Carnatic. Soon after the Nawab consolidated his control over the country, he reversed his relations with his allies. Mohammad Ali embarked upon a policy aimed at the destruction of smaller powers. In their alliance with and aid to the Nawab, the English found an opportunity to employ their armed forces, to exact financial rewards and to tighten up their grip over the Carnatic. In disregard to the services rendered by Pratap Singh, they promptly gave up all pretence of their alliance with Tanjore and assisted the Nawab for the liquidation of the kingdom. Tanjore, on the other hand, found itself isolated. It could neither find an ally nor mobilise any formidable strength for its defence. The alienation of several powers of South India by its steadfast attachment to the English and the attenuation of its military power by its long service to its allies ultimately reacted against its interests. The collusion of its British ally with the Nawab exposed the kingdom to a sad predicament.

1. Nawab's Settlement with Tanjore

In 1762 the Nawab, confident of his growing power, unveiled his designs on Tanjore. He asserted that he was entitled to get

as large a sum as 1,36,50,000 rupees from this kingdom. This amount, according to Mohammad Ali, represented a total of the arrears of tribute from the year 1748, a sum of seven lakhs of rupees for which Pratap Singh gave a bond to his father Anwar-ud-din as the price of peace and the interest accrued therefrom.[1] However, the Nawab admitted that the Rajah had obtained from him an abatement in the annual tribute and an exemption from the payment of tribute for a few years in return for his services for the defence of Trichinopoly against Chanda Sahib and Nandi Rajah. Mohammad Ali added that he was entitled to get possession of Koilody and Elangad from Tanjore and to receive 12,00,000 chakrams,[2] being the revenue from these districts for the period of Rajah's occupation together with its interest.[3]

Neither permitting the Rajah the right of self-defence nor seeking an amicable settlement, the Nawab decided to assert his claims through force of arms. He requested the Madras Council to furnish military aid. Lord Pigot, the Governor, finding the advantages of alliance and aid, promptly agreed to the request. In justification of his decision, he asserted that as the Wallajahs preserved the kingdom of Tanjore from destruction, it was reasonable to collect tribute. He held a meeting with Mohammad Ali

[1] In 1745 Nawab Anwar-ud-din defeated Rajah Pratap Singh and forced him to give a bond for seven lakhs of rupees and collected some ready money. T. Venkataswamy Rao, (ed.), *Tanjore District Manual* (Madras, 1915), vol. 2, pp. 779-780.

[2] Literally 'Chakram' means wheel. A circle-shaped coin, it was in circulation in South India. Its value varied, but usually it was exchanged for two and a quarter rupees (M.C.C., vol. 3, printed introduction, p. 3).

[3] In justification of his claims, the Nawab forwarded certain strange arguments. He pointed out that the Rajah saved fifty-nine lakhs of rupees (usual figure given is fifty-six lakhs) out of the seventy lakhs which he promised to Muzaffar Jang, eleven lakhs which he offered to Nasir Jang and escaped from the exactions of Chanda Sahib on account of the death of these rulers. He further asserted that had any other Nawab ruled at Trichinopoly, he would have even annexed Tanjore, but the Wallajahs protected the state from the enemies. (Mohammad Ali, letter to Madras Council, received on 13 Jan., 1762, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 31).

However, it should be noted that the Nawab had ceded Koilody and Elangad to Tanjore in return for the military aid furnished by Pratap Singh. He did not mention precisely the concessions which he had made already. It should also be remembered that had Tanjore been subjected to exactions, it was due to the failure of the overlord, Mohammad Ali, to give protection. In fact, the Nawab forwarded his claims without imposing any self-punishment for his own failure.

at Madras and decided to send an army to Tanjore.[4] Really, the English, the Nawab and the Rajah owed their political survival to joint venture. In fact, the Governor, guided by political expediency, decided to support the stronger ally against the weaker. Still, Lord Pigot did not venture into a conflict. He decided against the use of force. Attempting no explanation at the quick reversal of his stand, he decided to take shelter under lofty principles. He declared to the Nawab that a war was a calamity to all the parties and hence a truly great prince from considerations of justice and humanity would always try every means of negotiation to arrive at a reasonable accommodation. He proceeded to the extent of asserting that 'I consider the King of Tanjore as a Sovereign prince with whom it is neither your interest nor mine to enter into a war'. Lord Pigot offered his own services for effecting a peaceful settlement of the issue.[5] In reality, military considerations forced the Governor to take this unpalatable course of action. Threatened by an invasion, Pratap Singh appealed to Raghunatha Rao, the Maratha general, for aid, promising to pay him twenty lakhs of rupees. In response to the entreaties of a fellow Maratha, Raghunatha Rao promptly detached 20,000 horse to the southern borders of Maharashtra to march for the defence of Tanjore, on the first alarm.[6] However, Lord Pigot's decision to seek a peaceful solution to the question averted a possible conflict between the English and the Marathas.

In an attempt to settle the issue, Lord Pigot intimated the Rajah of the claims of the Nawab and urged him to comply with them. But Pratap Singh, in his reply, satisfied himself with furnishing a long list of the manifold services he rendered to the English and the Wallajahs.[7] Understanding that nothing could be settled by correspondence, the Madras Council in May 1762 sent its emissary Josias Du Pre to Tanjore with instructions to support the whole demand of the Nawab but to use discretion in a settlement for any possible amount not below twenty lakhs of rupees as it appeared that the Nawab intended to admit a very large abatement. He also directed his deputy to assure the Company's guarantee to

[4] Mohammad Ali, 30 March 1762, reference to Lord Pigot's decision, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 80.

[5] Lord Pigot, 31 May 1762, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 128.

[6] Mohammad Ali, 8 April 1762, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 93.

[7] Madras Council, 8 April 1762, Military Despatches (hereinafter referred to as M.D.) to England, vol. 3, pp. 41-42.

Tanjore against the Nawab's demands except the annual tribute if the Rajah agreed to a settlement on the specified terms.[8]

On his way to Tanjore, Du Pre visited the Nawab at Trichinopoly and appraised him of the instructions he had received.[9] In June he held discussions with the Rajah and persuaded him into an agreement. Pratap Singh consented to pay twenty-seven lakhs of rupees—seven lakhs more than the minimum fixed by Lord Pigot—in clearance of all the claims of the Nawab for the years up to 1762 and four lakhs as the annual tribute. Mohammad Ali, on the other hand, was required to confirm the cession of Koilody and Elangad and to restore Arni to its former chief, a vassal of Tanjore.[10] The Nawab accepted the terms but wanted to reserve a right to coerce the Rajah to submission at the first opportunity. But Lord Pigot for fear that Pratap Singh would not agree to any reservation being made, denounced the idea of annexation as the worst the Nawab could place before his eyes. Helpless without

[8] Lord Pigot in Council, 31 May 1762, M.C., vol. 16, p. 136.

[9] Josias Du Pre, 26 July 1762, vol. 16, p. 136, letter to Madras Council, M.C., vol. 16, p. 238.

[10] Lord Pigot in Council, 17 August 1762, M.C., vol. 17, p. 327.

Rajah Pratap Singh agreed to the terms not without a stubborn opposition. He asserted that he had already discharged seven lakhs of rupees for which he had given the bond, and that the Nawab ceded Koilody and Elangad and released him from the obligation of paying tribute for ten years and that the usual tribute was only two lakhs of rupees. In reply, the Nawab stated that he had ceded the districts only to dissuade the Rajah from joining Nandi Rajah, thus admitting the assertion of the ruler of Tanjore. (Mohammad Ali, no date, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 141).

These claims and counter-claims instead of securing any real purpose would only place a negotiator in bewilderment. Lord Pigot correctly remarked that no idea could be formed what was justly due. (Madras Council, 8 April 1762, M.D., to England, vol. 3, p. 41). On an examination of these viewpoints, the impression derived is that the Nawab was entitled to get some amount and the Rajah was entitled to get Koilody and Elangad. Hence Du Pre was justified in working out an acceptable formula on the basis of these diverse assertions.

Of the twenty-seven lakhs of rupees which the Rajah agreed to pay, one lakh was given as a present to the officers of Tanjore who helped the settlement and four lakhs to the Nawab's officers under the head 'durbar charges'. (Lord Pigot in Council, 17 August 1762, M.C., vol. 17, p. 328). However, the Nawab gained no benefit except that the payment helped to clear a part of his old debt—for the amount of twenty-six lakhs was credited towards the liquidation of his debt to the Company (Mohammad Ali, 9 September 1762, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 10, pp. 217-219).

the support of the Company, Mohammad Ali gave a reluctant consent.[11]

The treaty, signed on the 12th of October 1762 under the auspices of the Madras Council provided for a settlement of different issues. Pratap Singh paid twenty-two lakhs of rupees—besides the four lakhs to the Nawab's durbar and one lakh to the agents who assisted in the settlement,—in full payment of all claims of the Nawab until the 10th of July 1762. He agreed to pay four lakhs of rupees a year as tribute to Arcot. Mohammad Ali, on his part, confirmed the cession of Koilody and Elangad and restored Arni to its former chief. The Company undertook the responsibility for the enforcement of the stipulations. If any party violated the provisions, the Company promised its assistance to the other to compel the erring to fulfil the agreement and to give due satisfaction.[12]

The treaty in its final form provided for a tripartite agreement among the Nawab, the Rajah and the Company. Each party undertook an obligation and derived a benefit. Mohammad Ali confirmed the cession of Koilody and Elangad to Tanjore and restricted his demand upon the principality to four lakhs of rupees a year as tribute. In return, he received twenty-seven lakhs of rupees in lieu of all his claims. Tanjore accepted the sovereignty of Arcot and agreed to pay tribute as a part of his obligation. The Rajah retained possession of the districts already ceded by Mohammad Ali. The English assumed the position of an arbiter between the Nawab and the Rajah. This amounted to the extension of British influence to the relations of Arcot with Tanjore, of the sovereign with his tributary. The Company assumed the role of the guarantor to the substitution of a principle in the place of force in deciding Tanjore's quantum of payments to Arcot and the retention of the Rajah's independence subject to the payment of a tribute. This, on the one hand, restricted the sovereignty of the Nawab over Tanjore and, on the other, made the Rajah dependent upon the English for the continued enjoyment of his rights. The political influence granted by this treaty complemented the territorial interest gained with the acquisition of Devikottai. The Company obtained a financial relief too, for it received the twenty-six lakhs of rupees paid by Pratap Singh in clearance of a part of Nawab's debt.

[11] Mohammad Ali, 9 September 1762, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 10, p. 218.

[12] C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties etc.* (Calcutta, 1864), vol. 5, no. 45.

Strangely, soon after the settlement of the treaty, the Nawab gave vent to his dissatisfaction in another form. When the terms were settled, it did not occur either to Pratap Singh or to Lord Pigot that disputes might arise concerning the control of the banks of the Kaveri near Trichinopoly where it was always in the power of the Nawab to ruin the cultivation of Tanjore by diverting waters.[13] In 1763 the Rajah employed workers for the construction of a bank across the river at Mellore, near Trichinopoly in Nawab's territory as it was the practice, for drawing water to augment the supplies to the fields. But when he completed three-fourths of the project, the Nawab stopped the work. With the advent of the monsoon, the river swelled, broke the bank and descended into the Coleroon. Pratap Singh offered a present of one lakh of rupees to the Nawab for permission to complete the work, still Mohammad Ali refused.[14] Lurking in this attitude of the Nawab was his latent motive to drive the Rajah to hostility so that he could exploit the situation for abrogating the treaty signed under the Company's auspices and for proceeding with the annexation.[15] In December 1763 before this dispute could be settled, the old Rajah passed away. Tuljaji, the son and successor of Pratap Singh, requested the aid of the Madras Council for

[13] Above Srirangam River Kaveri branches into two: the northern river called Coleroon and the southern, Kaveri. A grove called Lathe Toape situated at the branching point assured an equitable division of the flow into the two rivers, but it was destroyed during the conflicts with Chanda Sahib. Since then a greater part of the water flowed into the Coleroon. Thirteen miles downstream the rivers approach very near to each other to form the island of Srirangam, after which the northern river obtains a level of twenty feet below the bed of the southern branch which supplies water to the fields of Tanjore. At some remote period the Kaveri burst through the narrow intervening neck and descended into the Coleroon. A huge bank was constructed to maintain the flow at a higher level into the Kaveri in order to irrigate the lands. As the bank was situated in the territory of the Nawab, he maintained control over it. Every year, during high floods, several thousands of workers with bundles of straw and loads of mud used to stand in watch night and day at the spot. The Nawab, at times utilised this advantage which geography gave him to harass the Tanjoreans.

In 1767 the Nawab cut off the Mellore channel which the Rajah constructed for drawing water to the fields. A year later the Nawab opened it as he required the services of Tanjore against Hyder Ali. (Umdut ul Umra, 10 August 1767, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 15, pp. 213-217). In fact selfish motives governed the Nawab's policy towards Tanjore.

[14] Pratap Singh, 30 May 1763, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 11, pp. 196-197.

[15] Lord Pigot in Council, August 1764, M.C., vol. 20, p. 496.

obtaining the Nawab's permission to begin the work anew. At the instance of Robert Palk, the Governor, the Nawab permitted the repair of the banks.[16] For the time being the dispute was settled; but the territorial ambition of Mohammad Ali remained unabated.

2. Mohammad Ali's Demands

The Nawab found an opportunity to present fresh demands on Tanjore in the attempt made by the latter for dealing with the hostility of Mysore. In August 1767 the first Anglo-Mysore war broke out. The longstanding animosity of Mysore with the English and the Wallajahs and the assistance given by the Company to the Nizam for an invasion of Mysore in 1766 and the determination of Hyder Ali to crown Reza Sahib, son of Chanda Sahib,[17] as the Nawab of the Carnatic precipitated the outbreak of war. Tanjore felt the impact of the conflict in January 1769 when Hyder Ali advanced to Turaiyur. The combination of the poligars and the scandalous behaviour of the troops of the Nawab enabled the forces of Mysore to occupy Srivalliputtur, Rajapalayam and Vasudevanallur in Tinnevelly.[18] Hyder Ali, meanwhile, carried fire and sword to Trichinopoly, and Tanjore. He plundered and set fire to the villages in Koilody, Elangad and Shiali. The Mysore chief threatened the Rajah with the destruction of the whole country and the slaughter of the inhabitants, unless the latter paid compensation for assisting Captain Richard Smith, the British general, in the capture of Karur in August 1760. Tuljaji appealed to the Nawab and the Company for aid, but received nothing.[19] Left unsupported, and anxious to save the country from destruction, the prince purchased peace by paying four lakhs of rupees.[20]

Despite his failure to rush succour to Tanjore at the critical situation, the Nawab did not spare the kingdom. In September 1769 the Nawab requested the Company's assistance to compel the Rajah to pay twenty-five lakhs of rupees as compensation for his alleged failure to render active service against Hyder Ali during

[16] Madras Council, 20 October 1764 and 30 January 1765, M.D. to England, vol. 3, pp. 153-156 and vol. 4, pp. 12 and 13.

[17] Charles Bourchier in Council, no date, 1766, M.C., vol. 25, p. 398.

[18] George Brown, 15 and 23 March 1769, letters to Madras Council, Military Sundries (hereinafter referred to as M.S.), vol. 40, pp. 342 and 358.

[19] Rajah Tuljaji, 26 January 1769, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 17, p. 27.

[20] -do- 1 September 1769, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 17, p. 448 and S. Radhakrishna Iyer, *A General History of Pudukkottai State*, pp. 233-234.

the Mysore war. In an attempt to strengthen his case, Mohammad Ali levelled other charges too. He asserted that the Rajah assisted the rebel Khan Sahib,[21] encouraged the poligars to join Hyder Ali and that he claimed batta for the few troops which he sent to join the Wallajah forces in the war against Mysore. In justification of his demand, Mohammad Ali presented certain interesting arguments. He asserted that such exactions were in consonance with the custom of the land. In repetition of what he stressed to Lord Pigot in 1762, he contended that Saadat ulla Khan and Dost Ali exacted from Tanjore at the rates of seventy, eighty and even hundred lakhs. Had not the French been beaten, they would have forced the Rajah to pay the whole amount of seventy lakhs of rupees for which he gave a bond. Proceeding further, the Nawab claimed that had the avaricious Nizam Ali, the ruling chief of Hyderabad, retained control of the Carnatic, he would not have been content with anything less than one crore. He added that the kingdom grew prosperous because of the uninterrupted flow of water from the Kaveri. In an attempt to win the British support for the contemplated expedition to Tanjore, he declared that unless he realised the amount from the Rajah, he would not be able to fulfil his own engagements with the Company.[22]

However, the arguments of Mohammad Ali reflected no realities. Zulficar Khan led an expedition, but compromised with Tanjore for an annual tribute of four lakhs of rupees. This formed the basis of the settlement of the treaty of 1762. The successors of Zulficar Khan exacted whatever they could, but that proved that they were tyrants. The Rajah resisted their demands whenever he could. Therefore, it was of little purpose to quote what the previous rulers did. Besides, the Nawab furnished no substantial aid to Tanjore against the invasions of Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang or the French; if he did, it was in his own interest. The Rajah, for fear of desolation of his country, agreed to pay seventy lakhs to Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang, but except a minor portion of it, he never paid the agreed amount. A similar situation, together with the inability of the Nawab to defend the tributary state, forced the Rajah to settle peace with Hyder Ali. The Nawab himself did not deny the assistance Tanjore rendered

[21] In 1763 Khan Sahib, otherwise called Yusuf Khan, the governor of Madurai, supported by the French organised a rebellion. But the Nawab, ably assisted by the English, suppressed it and reasserted his authority over the southernmost provinces of the Carnatic.

[22] Mohammad Ali, 9 March 1768, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 16, pp. 105-109.

against Mysore, for he characterised the Rajah's demand for the payment of batta to his forces as a crime. In fact, Tuljaji assisted the Wallajahs though he was not obliged to do so under the treaty of 1762 and his country was not protected. It is not certain that the Rajah encouraged Khan Sahib in his rebellion, but the Nawab furnished no evidence to substantiate the charge. In addition, the treaty of 1762 drew a line between the Nawab's ambition and the Rajah's rights. The unwarranted claims of the Nawab, in fact, not only violated the treaty of 1762, but revealed a glaring misinterpretation of facts and a want of candour so striking in his character.

In spite of these, the Madras Council asked the Nawab to demand a contribution from Tanjore, if he could do it without giving the impression of violating the treaty, as it felt it was only reasonable.[23] Tuljaji, on the other hand, requested the Nawab to grant a remission of the peishcush as Hyder Ali burned and destroyed his villages.[24] Mohammad Ali, however, took no immediate action against Tanjore because of the reluctance of the Madras Council to extend any support. An opportunity presented itself when the Tanjoreans embarked upon aggression on Ramnad and Sivaganga.

3. Tuljaji's Expedition to the Marawa States

While the contemplated expedition of the Nawab was hanging like the sword of Damocles on Tanjore, Rajah Tuljaji renewed his conflict with Ramnad and Sivaganga on the question of the possession of Hanumantgudi. This disputed territory originally belonging to the Marawars changed hands several times. During the campaigns of Nandi Rajah against Trichinopoly, the Setupati re-occupied it from Tanjore but restored it due to the intervention of Lord Pigot. Yet Damodara Pillai and Tandavaraya Pillai, the ministers of Ramnad and Sivaganga, respectively, re-conquered the district during Hyder Ali's invasion of Tanjore by a joint venture.[25] Tuljaji referred the issue to the Madras Council, but received the reply that he was at liberty to clear the territory of its invaders.[26] Meanwhile the Rajah's relations with Pudukkottai

[23] Charles Bourchier, 19 April 1768, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 16, pp. 133-135.

[24] Charles Bourchier in Council, 12 October 1769, M.C., vol. 35, p. 52.

[25] Tuljaji, 15 July 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 187-190.

[26] Mohammad Ali, 8 March 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 83-85.

and Sivaganga too were strained. The Kallans of Pudukkottai made incursions into Tanjore and the Rajah of Sivaganga captured a few elephants belonging to Tuljaji.[27] These factors, though of minor importance, led Tuljaji to an ambitious scheme: to enthrone at Ramnad his candidate Mappila Tevar, a rival to Setupati Muttu-ramalinga and to establish his sway over the Marawars and Pudukkottai.[28]

In February 1771 Tuljaji, in the command of a large detachment of 4,000 horse and numerous sepoys, marched against Ramnad.[29] He won the assistance of the Dutch who were annoyed at Setupati's interference in their management of the pearl fisheries, with an offer to grant them commercial rights and to cede the ports of Tondi in Sivaganga.[30] However, the Madras Council did not favour the aggressive policy of Tanjore. Josias Du Pre (1770-1773), the Governor of Fort St George, suggested restraint from hostilities, pointing out to the Rajah the impropriety of making himself the judge of the charges he himself made against the Marawars.[31] But Tuljaji, ignoring the suggestion, proceeded ahead. Ramnad, on the other hand, enlisted the support of the ruler of Sivaganga by ceding Triupatore and the services of a body of the Nawab's troops by granting it Pallikonda.[32] In a bid to win the aid of the Nawab, the Setupati acknowledged the Wallajah-overlordship over Ramnad. Mohammad Ali promised his protection and asked the Setupati to stand firm,[33] but did nothing, perhaps because of his anxiety to see both the powers weakened by mutual conflict for his taking advantage of the situation.

The Tanjore forces disguised as the Nawab's marching to the aid of the Marawars, advanced close to the border post of Moodervattu Nattam and launched a surprise attack on the 3rd of

[27] Tuljaji, letter to Madras Council, received on 25 March 1771, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 109-111.

[28] Mohammad Itabar Khan, 17 March 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 118.

[29] Dalawai of Ramnad, no date, copy of letter to Mackdoom Ali Khan, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 65.

[30] Dalawai of Ramnad, 26 January 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 30.

[31] Josias Du Pre, 14 February 1771, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 32.

[32] Syd Mackdoom Ali, 5 March 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 86-87.

[33] Dalawai of Ramnad, 10 February 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 36-38.

February. After a clash in which each side lost about ninety men, the Ramnad troops withdrew to Armogam.[34] Now Manoji, the general of Tanjore, wisely decided to commit no further aggression because of the possibility of wider entanglement, but the young Rajah overruled him. In succession, the invaders swept off the posts of Sudarapandyapuram, Warroor, Mangalgudi, Kannangudi, Kadavalandam and Hanumantgudi,[35] and infested the strong post of Armogam, the key to Ramnad. Armogam fell on the 19th. The next day the forces appeared before the fort of Ramnad.[36]

Tuljaji suggested terms for a settlement of his choice. He asked the Rani to pay a visit to him with her son Setupati for requesting his pardon for offering resistance, to give her daughter in marriage to the son of Mappila Tevar, to agree to the marriage of Setupati with the sister of Mappila Tevar, to cede the district of Armogam to this rival to the throne and to surrender half of her treasures together with two heavy guns and two large elephants to Tanjore. The terms were indeed humiliating, for they were aimed at the dismemberment of Ramnad and the firm establishment of Tanjore's influence on the affairs of the Marawars. Still the queen gave her consent to matrimonial alliances and even to the territorial clause and offered to part with two lakhs of rupees, one heavy gun and one large elephant. But she categorically refused to pay a visit to the Rajah, obviously because it amounted to an insult to her honour. This was indeed a trivial affair, but Tuljaji, giddy with vanity, broke off the negotiation.[37]

Hostilities being renewed, the Tanjoreans took positions on the eastern and northern sides of the fort of Ramnad and battered down a part of the wall to the extent of forty feet. The garrison, 9,000 men strong, on the other hand, repaired the breaches in the night and made repeated sallies. The Marawars broke open the big tank of Ramnad and flooded the camp of Tanjore.[38] The frequent skirmishes so much exhausted both the sides that negotiations were renewed. On the 9th of March a settlement was made, by which the queen ceded most of the occupied territories—

[34] An Intelligence paper, 10 February 1771, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 36-38.

[35] Tondaiman, no date, letter to his vakeel, copy, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 76.

[36] Mackdoom Ali, 27 February 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 80-81.

[37] Mohammad Ali, 8 March 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 83-85.

[38] Advice papers for Tanjore, 4 and 6 March 1771, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 89-93.

Hanumantgudi to Tanjore, and Armogam to Mappila Tevar. She paid 1,30,000 rupees to the Rajah and parted with two pieces of cannon and two elephants. The weakened Ramnad was left in possession of only its southern district. On the other hand, Tanjore acquired territories yielding an annual revenue of three lakhs of chakrams.[39]

After this victory, the forces of Tanjore marched against Sivaganga. Facing no serious opposition, the invaders advanced on Nelakkottai, the capital. On the 17th of March Tuljaji directed Rajah Udaya Tevar to cede a part of his territory, to pay a handsome present and to part with six of his elephants. No terms being settled, Tuljaji decided to storm the fort, but was caught in the rear by the Nawab's expedition to Tanjore.[40]

4. British-Wallajah Expedition to Tanjore

Though Mohammad Ali did not extend any assistance to the Marawars, he denounced Tuljaji's expedition as an hostile action against his circar. He claimed it his right to maintain order in the relations between dependent states and asserted that Tanjore, Ramnad, Sivaganga, and Pudukkottai were dependent upon the Carnatic. Taking this opportunity, he requested military aid of the Company for punishing the king of Tanjore.[41]

The Nawab's demand for military support placed the Madras Council in a quandary. The treaty of 1762 for which the Company stood guarantee did not envisage the possibility of a conflict over Marawa territories and did not provide for dealing with such a situation. The claim of both the Nawab and the Rajah to the overlordship over the Marawars added to its embarrassment. Josias Du Pre, the Governor (1770-1773), appointed a Commission consisting of himself, Warren Hastings and Samuel Ardley to enquire and decide the political status of the Marawa states. In its report dated the 3rd of April 1771 the Commission observed that neither the Marawars nor Pudukkottai paid any regular tribute to any power any time, though the rulers of Trichinopoly exacted contributions from them under threat of violence whenever they felt themselves strong to do so. It concluded that the Marawars as well as Pudukkottai maintained their independence against Trichinopoly as well as Tanjore.[42]

[39] A letter from Tanjore, 15 March 1771, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 106.

[40] S. Radhakrishna Iyer, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State*, p. 251.

[41] Josias Du Pre, 20 February 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 49 and Mohammad Ali, 24 March 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 119-123.

[42] S. Radhakrishna Iyer, *A General History of the Pudukkottai State*, p. 245.

The findings of the Commission were mostly substantiated by facts. But it cannot be denied that the queen-regent of Ramnad accepted the overlordship of the Wallajahs in a bid to obtain Nawab's aid against the Tanjore invaders. This gave a definite right to the Nawab, but the latter neutralised this by his earlier commitment which permitted the Rajah of Tanjore to establish his sway over the Marawars.[43] This limitation deprived Mohammad Ali of his right either to take any counter action against Tanjore or to punish the Rajah. The Madras Council did not take this into consideration; still it refused its co-operation to the Nawab because of the possibility of the Maratha powers going to the aid of Tanjore. It cautioned the Nawab that as Tuljaji was related to the King of Maharashtra, a conflict with Tanjore would lead to a war with the Marathas and the treaty of 1762 made no provision for the defence of the Marawars.[44]

Failing to exploit the Tanjorean aggression on the Marawars, Mohammad Ali decided to try legal means for enlisting the Company's support against Tanjore. Now, he brought forward several accusations. He held the Rajah guilty of violating the treaty of 1762 by neglecting the payment of tribute for 1769. He charged that the Rajah instigated the Marathas, the Nizam and the French to ravage the Carnatic. In reality these arguments of Mohammad Ali had no substance. Hyder Ali's expedition inflicted such a serious damage to the economy of the country, that the Rajah found it difficult to pay the peishcush. The Rajah incurred expenses for assisting the Nawab too. Still, it cannot be denied that Tuljaji committed a serious error of judgment in withholding the payment of tribute when he decided to commit aggression on the Marawars and when the Nawab waited for a *casus belli*. It is not certain whether the Rajah instigated the powers to invade the Carnatic; but it was true that the Rajah, due to his apprehension of an invasion of his territory, as contemplated by Mohammad Ali, sought Maratha aid. He wanted to involve the Carnatic in troubles because his security depended upon the Nawab's preoccupation with external problems.[45] The Nawab, nevertheless, presented his arguments properly sugar-coated to the taste of the corrupt Madras Council. In return for assistance to conquer Tanjore, he agreed not only to meet all the military

[43] Tuljaji, 15 July 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 187-190.

[44] Josias Du Pre, 23 April 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, vol. 19, p. 149.

[45] Josias Du Pre in Council, 13 and 28 March 1771, M.C., vol. 41, pp. 80 and 92.

expenses of the expedition but offered to make a present of ten lakhs of star pagodas amounting to thirty-five lakhs of rupees[46] to the Company. Now the objections which held the Madras Council under restraint vanished in thin air. Governor Du Pre remarked that though he would not make a claim or a condition to any present, if the Nawab would offer it out of his good will, he would willingly receive it and advise the Court of Directors thereof. Still no quick action was taken because of the apprehension that the Nizam might invade the Northern Circars and the Marathas, by virtue of their kinship with Tuljaji, might invade the Carnatic whilst the Company was engaged in Tanjore.[47] In fact, Trimbuck Row, the Maratha general who received an advance payment of five lakhs of rupees from the Rajah, threatened to descend upon the Arcot Subah in the event of the Nawab's invasion of Tanjore. However, the circumstances turned favourable when the Nawab made a present of four lakhs of rupees and dissuaded him from going to the aid of Tanjore.[48]

In support of its decision to render military assistance to the Nawab for an expedition to Tanjore, the Madras Council presented its own propositions. It argued that the instructions of the Court of Directors invariably purported that peace and security of the Carnatic should be maintained and that the Nawab should be aided in the most efficient manner in his pretensions on Tanjore, that the refusal of the Rajah to pay the peishcush manifested a disposition dangerous to the security of the Carnatic, that Tuljaji's indulgence in the pleasures of the zanana resulted in the neglect of the welfare of his subjects and his appointment of Toral Shah and Hussain Shah, two agents of Hyder Ali, as ministers in 1772 warranted the application of remedial measures to prevent the recurrence of similar developments.[49] It further emphasised that it was necessary to avert the possibility of the Rajah seeking the aid of the rival powers like the French for liberating himself from the control of the Nawab,[50] that the Company had the responsibility to assist an ally of the British crown for the suppression of one of his tributaries whose conduct had become abnoxious to

[46] Mohammad Ali, 18 September 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 218-222.

[47] Josias Du Pre in Council, 13 March 1771, M.C., vol. 41, p. 80.

[48] M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, part 1, p. 423.

[49] Josias Du Pre, 25 September 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 19, pp. 223-225.

[50] Madras Council, 28 February 1772, M.D. to England, vol. 7-9, pp. 125-127.

him and that there was less danger to the security of the Carnatic by conquering Tanjore than tolerating its existence under the rule of a disaffected prince who displayed a disposition to join the first invader of the coast.[51] These arguments were just explanations aimed at the justification of what the Madras Council decided to do in return for financial and political rewards. Such being the case, they lacked substance. Its decision reflected an impression that as the oppressions of the Nawab turned the Rajah a bitter enemy, it was no good to suffer his existence. Restoration of confidence in the secure possession of Tanjore would have conciliated the prince with the Nawab. Yet neither the Nawab nor the Madras Council attempted this course because of reasons of their own.

In September 1771 the combined forces of the Nawab and the Company which were assembled at Trichinopoly, marched on Tanjore. Colonel Joseph Smith commanded the expedition while the Nawab's son Umdut ul Umara exercised civil control. Vellum, a regular and strong fort, situated six miles to the southwest of Tanjore was the first target of attack. On the 21st a breach having made, the forces fired a few shots, but found the fort deserted.[52] On the 25th Colonel Smith commenced a regular siege of Tanjore. The troops of the Rajah assembled in great number under the cover of a high ground and attacked the Company's troops, but suffered reverses in their attempts to cut off the communications of the enemy with Trichinopoly. On the 15th of October the besiegers silenced the guns on the ramparts and on the 18th made a practicable breach on the east wall. On the 25th night they made an attack, but found the fort strongly defended. Subsequently, a negotiation began and on the 27th the belligerents settled terms.[53] The war ended mysteriously abruptly, without achieving the objective of the expedition, namely annexation.

There followed three settlements. By the first settlement dated the 20th of October 1771, Tuljaji agreed to pay eight lakhs of rupees as arrears of tribute. He restored the districts and effects taken from the Marawars and abandoned all his rights which he claimed to have on Ramnad, Sivaganga and Pudukkottai. The Rajah ceded the districts of Tervanoor and Arni to the Nawab. He further consented to render military service to the Nawab at his own expense whenever required, to remain in amity with the

[51] Madras Council, 29 October 1773, M.D. to England, vol. 7-9, pp. 156-158.

[52] Josias Du Pre in Council, 23 September 1771, M.C., vol. 40, p. 830.

[53] -do- 4 November 1771, M.C., vol. 40, p. 928.

friends of the Circar and in enmity with the enemies of Arcot, to refuse protection to the rebels of the Carnatic as well as to the European deserters of the army of the Nawab and to safeguard the commercial interests of the English in his territory. The Nawab on his part permitted the Rajah to retain possession of Koilody and Elangad and agreed to restore Vellum to Tanjore. By the second settlement dated the 25th of October 1771, the Rajah assigned the district of Mayuram and part of the district of Kumbakonam yielding an annual revenue of sixteen and a quarter lakhs of rupees for two years in lieu of the payment of thirty-two and a half lakhs of rupees, estimated as war indemnity. By the third settlement dated the 26th of October 1771, the Rajah promised to pay the annual tribute to the Nawab without deceipt or delay and to undertake no military operations whatsoever.[54] Subsequently, significant modifications to the territorial settlement were carried into effect. As the possession of the fort of Vellum, the key to Tanjore, was of utmost importance to the Wallajah interests, the Nawab directed his son Umdut ul Umara who settled the terms, to obtain possession of it. A fresh negotiation now ensued and Umdut ul Umara forced the helpless Rajah to restore not only Vellum, but also Koilody and Elangad to the Nawab.[55] Mohammad Ali permitted the Company to garrison Vellum with its own troops.[56]

The settlements conferred territorial and financial gains on the Nawab and commercial advantages on the Company—all at the expense of Tanjore. The Nawab acquired Koilody, Elangad, Arni, Vellum and Tervanoor. The possession of the 'anacat' in Koilody gave him control over the irrigation projects of Tanjore. Besides, the settlement excluded the interests of Tanjore from the Marawars and left the latter under the undisputed overlordship of the Wallajahs. The Rajah was required to pay the usual tribute but no reduction in proportion to the attenuation of his revenue as well as territory was conceded. The Company gained more commercial and military influence, but the settlement mentioned nothing about the British guarantee to the treaty of 1762. The Nawab sought no reduction of the military strength of Tanjore, but required the Rajah to render service whenever he required it.

The Tanjore episode sheds light on the Nawab's latent fear of growing British influence and his intrigues to counteract it.

[54] C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties etc.*, vol. 5, pp. 264-266.

[55] Madras Council, 4 April 1772, M.D. to England, vol. 7, p. 75.

[56] Mohammad Ali, 13 November 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 253.

It was certain that Mohammad Ali desisted from the conquest of Tanjore not for want of inclination to obtain possession of so important a territory. Considering that the siege advanced successfully, that the breach appeared practicable and the military strength overwhelming, there was every reason to believe that the fort might fall at the first assault.[57] But Umdut ul Umara declared that because of rains and loss of horses and bullocks, the army doubted its ability to storm the fort.[58] Had this been true, it would seem hardly possible for him to dictate such humiliating terms as he did to the Rajah. Mohammad Ali, on the other hand, when enquired by the Madras Council, parried that the settlement was conformable neither to his wishes nor to his friends.[59] He sought to convey an impression that he withdrew from hostilities for fear of Maratha invasion. By a secret agreement he even induced the Marathas to invade the Arcot Subah. The Madras Council, anxious to repel the aggression, offered its aid to the Nawab, but the latter politely declined it. This revealed the object of the mock invasion by the Marathas and the mysteries about the abrupt termination of the siege of Tanjore.

In fact, two factors induced the Nawab to enter into a settlement with Tanjore. He wanted to make a merit with the Marathas of Poona by giving an impression that he desisted from the conquest of Tanjore out of deference to their sentiments.[60] This was necessitated as the Maratha general Trimbuck Row conveyed his concern to the Nawab in favour of a peaceful settlement.[61] More than this, what oppressed his mind was his apprehension of a latent purpose in the Company's association with the expedition. He considered the British guarantee to the treaty of 1762 as a rankling thorn in his side. The Nawab feared that the sequel of conquest at this juncture would be the establishment of British sway over Tanjore.[62] This apprehension was not without foundation. When the Nawab requested assistance for an expedition

[57] Mohammad Ali, 22 December 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 20, pp. 1-3.

[58] Umdut ul Umara, 8 November 1771, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 20, p. 8.

[59] Mohammad Ali, 22 December 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 20, pp. 1-3.

[60] M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, part 1, p. 423.

[61] Trimbuck Row, letter to Nawab of Arcot, received on 4 December 1771, M.C.C., vol. 19, p. 273.

[62] *Original Papers Relative to Tanjore* (1771, London), p. 40.

to Tanjore, the Madras Council conveyed its view to the Court of Directors, that 'it would be more advisable for the Company to retain it (Tanjore) in their own possession or reserving the sovereignty, place in the management of it either the present Rajah or any other, subject to such limitations and conditions as might make him useful, but put it out of his power to be dangerous (to the interests of the English)'.[63] It was possible that the Company's design reached the notice of Mohammad Ali, for he constantly kept an eye on the proceedings of the Madras Council. By his quarrel and subsequent accommodation, Mohammad Ali fancied that he removed the restraint imposed by the Company's guarantee and could thereafter exercise authority in any way that might best suit his whims without any hazard of British interposition.[64]

5. Conquest of Tanjore

In 1773 the Nawab, in pursuit of his scheme of expansion, decided to annex Tanjore. Perhaps he felt that the circumstances had become favourable as the English assisted his conquest of Ramnad and Sivaganga in 1771 and the Madras Council headed by Governor Alexander Wynch seemed very amiable. As usual, this was preceded by charges, substantial as well as imaginary. This time, he asserted that Tuljaji violated the terms of the settlement of 1771, for he refused aid for the conquest of the Marawa states,[65] that he assisted the rulers of Ramnad and Sivaganga in their resistance to the Carnatic forces in 1772, that he mortgaged villages to the Dutch and the Danes, without the consent of Arcot, and that he induced Hyder Ali and the Marathas to invade the Carnatic. Mohammad Ali, further, warned the Madras Council that unless he suppressed Tanjore Raj, the Marathas and the French would convert it into a sphere of their influence and endanger the Wallajah and the British interests in the Carnatic. In return for military assistance, he reiterated his former unfulfilled offer that he would make a present of ten lakhs of star pagodas; and in addition, promised to support three battalions of the Company's troops at his own expense.[66]

[63] Madras Council, 31 January 1770, M.D. to England, vol. 7, p. 8.

[64] Madras Council, 28 February 1772, M.D. to England, vol. 7, pp. 125-127.

[65] In 1772 the combined forces of the Nawab and the English Company invaded and annexed the Marawa states of Ramnad and Sivaganga.

[66] Mohammad Ali, 18 January 1773, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 22, pp. 94-98.

In reply, Alexander Wynch (1773-1775), the successor of Du Pre in the Presidency of Madras stated approvingly that it was always a matter of satisfaction to support the interests of the Nawab consistent with British policy and that it was dangerous to suffer a power so disaffected as Tanjore was to remain in the heart of the Carnatic.[67] Regarding the present, Wynch as his predecessor remarked, replied 'whatever your Highness shall please out of your goodwill and friendship to offer me as a present to the Company, I shall most willingly receive and advise them thereof.'[68]

As the Nawab, with the aid of the Company, decided to annex Tanjore, the charges mark yet another attempt to present excuses aimed at the vindication of what he wanted to do. No doubt, the Rajah was bound to render assistance to the Nawab by the terms of the settlement of 1771, but it does not appear that the latter asked for the service of Tanjore for the Marawa expedition. It was certain that Tuljaji, exasperated at Mohammad Ali's determination to suppress Tanjore Raj, sought the support of Hyder Ali[69] and the Marathas, but he was helpless so long as the British forces held Vellum, the key to Tanjore. In consequence, his machinations could have been checked without any resort to extreme steps. Besides, in 1773 when Wynch agreed to send an expedition, he ruled out the possibility of any foreign invasion of the Carnatic at that juncture.[70] In reality Tanjore in 1773 presented no serious threat to the Nawab's interest so as to warrant any military action. The Rajah mortgaged villages to the Danes to find money to pay the tribute for the year 1772;[71] but as he was not prohibited from doing it, he violated no terms of his settlement with the Nawab. When the Madras Council decided on the annihilation of Tanjore Raj, Tuljaji earnestly appealed to Governor Wynch in these words: 'some offence should surely be proved upon me, without any show of equity to wage an unjust war against me is not consistent with reason. This charitable country is the support of multitudes of people, if you Sir, will preserve it from destruction you will be the most great, glorious and honoured of mankind. I am full of confidence that you will never do injustice

[67] Alexander Wynch in Council, 5 July 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 672.

[68] Alexander Wynch, 7 July 1773, letter to Mohammad Ali, M.C.C., vol. 22, pp. 107-108.

[69] Alexander Wynch, 13 August 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 802.

[70] -do- 5 July 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 672.

[71] -do- 13 August 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 802.

yourself nor listen to the face of the oppressor.'[72] But the Rajah's appeal fell on deaf ears. In fact, the helplessness of the Rajah, the avarice of the Nawab and the connivance of the English sealed the fate of the kingdom.

In August 1773 the forces of the Nawab and the Company led by Joseph Smith invaded Tanjore, the second time. They captured the posts of Tourgudi and Singarapettah and on the 21st took positions before the capital city.[73] An advance column commanded by Major Fletcher surprised a detachment of Tanjore, inflicting a loss of 1,000 men killed and wounded.[74] On the 27th Smith defeated the Tanjoreans in a battle, blew up the magazine and set fire to the town.[75] The siege continued for three weeks and on the 16th of September the breach made in the walls appeared practicable. At 12 noon the forces took positions, ready to attack. As the sun was very hot, the Rajah's army consisting of 20,000 men anticipated an assault in the evening and retired to their quarters for meals. The assailants now saw their opportunity: Smith surprised and carried the fort, with no loss whatsoever.[76] Tuljaji, his relations and ministers were taken prisoner in the palace. The grateful Nawab rewarded the services of the Company with a present of ten lakhs of star pagodas and entertained three battalions of its troops at his expense.[77]

The Nawab now decided to acquire Nagore, a commercial centre which the Rajah mortgaged to the Dutch. The Madras Council, however, hesitated to support an expedition, as that amounted to a violation of the treaties, concluded by Great Britain with Holland. Still, in consideration of Mohammad Ali's wishes, Governor Alexander Wynch directed Smith to co-operate with the Nawab's forces for an advance on Nagore, but to risk no conflict.[78] On the 21st of October the forces marched towards Nagore. To their glee, the Dutch withdrew to Negapatam. The Nawab obtained possession of the fort,[79] and by a subsequent

[72] Tuljaji, 13 August 1773, letter to Madras Council, M.C., vol. 46, p. 802.
[73] Alexander Wynch in Council, 8 August 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 786.
[74] -do- 25 August 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 835.
[75] -do- 31 August 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 851.
[76] -do- 19 September 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 883.
[77] Mohammad Ali, letter to Madras Council, received on 23 January 1776, M.C.C., vol. 25, pp. 2-6.
[78] Madras Council, 14 and 29 October 1773, M.D. to England, vol. 8, pp. 71-87.
[79] Mohammad Ali, 26 February 1776, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 25, p. 12.

settlement, he paid compensation to the Dutch.[80] In consequence of the increasing threat to their mercantile interests in Tanjore, the Dutch shifted their principal commercial centre from Negapatam to Colombo.[81]

It is curious to note how the Nawab linked one project with another. Early in his political career in consideration of winning the support of the powerful ruler of Tanjore against Mysore, Mohammad Ali permitted him to establish his sway over the Marawars. Yet either by persuasion or through the Company's intervention, he prevented Pratap Singh from attaining what he permitted. When Tuljaji embarked upon the scheme of conquest, Mohammad Ali accused the Raja of attacking the dependent states of the Carnatic, won the support of the English and invaded Tanjore, but stopped short of conquest. The Nawab, then, conquered the Marawa states on the ground that the latter rendered no service for the invasion of Tanjore. In turn, he held Tuljaji guilty of not furnishing any aid for his conquest of Ramnad and Sivaganga and annexed Tanjore.

6. A Diplomatic Defeat of the English

The Wallajah acquisition of Tanjore with British aid marked a serious error of judgment on the part of the Madras Council as much as a triumph of Mohammad Ali's intrigues over the Company's diplomacy. The settlement of 1762 granted to the English the status of an arbiter in the relations of Arcot with Tanjore. But the artful Mohammad Ali exploited financial and diplomatic corruption among the Anglo-Saxons not only to annihilate the status gained by them in Tanjore affairs but to assert his sovereignty over the principality. The offer of financial rewards enamoured the Company's representatives. The corrupt influence of the Nawab's private debt too went to his benefit. Mohammad Ali borrowed huge amounts from the English including the members of the Madras Council. In the Nawab's annexation of Tanjore the creditors saw an opportunity of recovering the debt or in lieu thereof obtaining assignments on the revenues of Tanjore. The governors of the period between 1763 and 1773, particularly Josias Du Pre and Alexander Wynch, were such weak characters that they lacked independence of judgment. They cherished a notion that the native rulers must be subsidised with troops and money in

[80] Madras Council, 25 January 1775, M.D. to England, vol. 10, p. 65.

[81] Madras Council, 4 July 1775, M.D. to England, vol. 10, pp. 85-86.

their pretensions against the tributaries.[82] Added to these, the Nawab succeeded in finding able advocates for his cause in England as well as in Madras. In an attempt to win the support of the British Crown against the Company, he commissioned John Macpherson, a Scottish adventurer. This mission was so successful that the British ministry posted its agents in the Carnatic.[83] Sir John Lindsay, appointed as British Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of the Nawab in 1770 and Sir Robert Harland who succeeded him in 1771 wielded their influence in favour of British military assistance being furnished to Mohammad Ali in his dealings with the subordinate rulers.[84] Lindsay categorically, but not correctly, asserted 'the more extensive his (Nawab's) Dominions, the more complete his Authority, the greater his revenue and the fuller his Treasury, they (the English) have the more to trust for in time of necessity. The supporting him in fact adding to the security of the Company—and the weakening him or suffering him to be so must in the end turn out to their own Disadvantage.'[85] No doubt Mohammad Ali had his own designs to get rid of British influence; yet the impression created by his advocates helped the realisation of his objective. The Company, in consequence, lost its acquired influence in Tanjore and created a prospective rival in the Nawab.

The triumph of the Nawab's manoeuvres in Tanjore reacted detrimentally upon British interests in the Carnatic. It imparted the greatest activity into his designs. Mohammad Ali appointed his second son Amir ul Umara, a young lord of intrigue and enterprise, as his deputy for southern Carnatic.[86] Entrusted with civil authority over Tanjore and Trichinopoly, the prince held the command of all the armed forces too.[87] As a right step toward the enforcement of his sovereignty, the Nawab spared no effort in perfecting his war machine. He created a regular army of 12,000 troops, seven regiments of cavalry and an artillery of 1,500 men. Commanded by Amir ul Umara and trained by European officers, this army served as the source of his newly asserted strength. The

[82] Mrs Frank Penny, *Fort St George Madras*, (London, 1900), p. 173.

[83] Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 197-199.

[84] B. S. Baliga, *Studies in Madras Administration* (Madras, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 314-315.

[85] Sir John Lindsay, 22 June 1771, letter to Madras Council, M.C., vol. 39, p. 579.

[86] Madras Council, 4 July 1775, M.D. to England, vol. 10, pp. 85-86.

[87] Alexander Wynch in Council, 1 May 1775, M.C., vol. 51, p. 596.

Nawab spent enormous amounts in reconstructing the fort of Tanjore and garrisoned it with his own troops.[88] Every attempt was made to improve the administration of Tanjore. He appointed Dubbeer, the able minister of Tuljaji, at the head of the revenue administration and brought competent servants from Arcot. The new administration repaired water courses, advanced loans for cultivation, distributed paddy seeds gratis, liquidated the public debts of the deposed prince and cleared the arrears of pay due to the discharged troops of Tanjore.[89]

These ambitious programmes, carried out for the consolidation of his strength in disregard to British authority, had their inevitable effect upon the economy of Tanjore. To finance his projects, the Nawab collected as much as 120 lakhs of rupees from Tanjore in the three years of his administration.[90] In 1775, the year of his sole management, the revenue realised from the territory amounted to eighty-one lakhs—a sum not reached until seventy-five years later. The largest collection ever raised by the Maratha rulers amounted to only fifty-seven and a half lakhs, which was in 1761.[91] In addition, the Nawab made assignments on revenue for ninety lakhs of rupees to private creditors.[92] No exaggeration, the ambitious dreams fired by Tanjore-annexation in Mohammad Ali's scheme of marching toward greatness crippled the country's economy.

The situation created by the folly of the English boomeranged upon them. Mohammad Ali cited his equality of status with the King of England as recognised by the Treaty of Paris[93] for alarming the servants of the Company and stressed his sovereignty as acknowledged by the Moghals for convincing the European powers of his complete independence.[94] In accordance with these assertions, he established direct relations with the French, Dutch and Danes in total disregard to British interests.[95] Alarmed at his efforts to render himself independent of the Company, the English

[88] M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, part I, p. 427.

[89] Mohammad Ali, letter to Madras Council, received on 23 January 1776, M.C.C., vol. 25, pp. 2-6.

[90] Dubbeer Naroo Pandit, 13 May 1776, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 25, p. 50.

[91] T. Venkataswamy Row, *Tanjore District Manual*, vol. 2, p. 810.

[92] *Lord Pigot's Narrative*, 1776, p. 3.

[93] The Treaty of Paris signed in 1763 terminated the Seven Years War.

[94] M. Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India*, part I, p. 427.

[95] Josias Du Pre in Council, 8 August 1772, M.C., vol. 44, p. 59.

sought permission to garrison the fort of Tanjore. But Mohammad Ali rejected the demand on the flimsy pretext that the Hindus were afraid of the Europeans killing their cows.[96] The Madras Council looked upon the concentration of vast powers with Amir ul Umara as a threat to its security. When it requested the Nawab to carry out a decentralisation of powers, Mohammad Ali bitterly opposed the Company's intervention and bluntly declared that he was the absolute lord of the country and the best judge of his own affairs.[97] In fact, the existence of Tanjore as a separate kingdom so long played a useful role for the English. It engaged and contained the Nawab's ambition and served as a buffer region between the Wallajah territorial interests and the British political influence. The liquidation of the principality rendered a direct confrontation of the English with the Nawab inevitable.

Neither moral consideration nor political vision guided the attitude of the Anglo-Saxons towards Tanjore. They held out the pretensions of an ally, exacted the services of the Tanjoreans in their wars against the French and utilised the influence of Pratap Singh for persuading Murari Rao to abandon the camp of Nandi Rajah. When their objective was realised, the English not only deserted their ally but joined hands with Mohammad Ali to humiliate a country weakened by long service to them. The settlement of 1762 conferred the status of an arbiter on the Company between the Nawab and Tanjore, but the English never wanted to do justice to its position. On the other hand, it with characteristic duplicity permitted Mohammad Ali to exact a contribution from Pratap Singh soon after Hyder Ali evacuated the Carnatic and subsequently in consideration of financial benefit assisted in the liquidation of the principality. Nor political wisdom guided the British policy. The extension of their influence depended upon the presence of centrifugal forces. A unified Carnatic was bound to collide with the rising power of the Company. The Nawab permitted Tanjore to annex Ramnad and Sivaganga as a reward for its services in his war against Mysore. If Tanjore obtained possession of the Marawa states, it would have, no doubt, enhanced the power of this kingdom. This would have furnished advantage to the Company either to preserve a balance of power on the coast or to counteract the growing influence of the Wallajahs. But the English by their own blunder nullified these prospects. However, the military superiority still enjoyed by them served as

[96] Alexander Wynch in Council, 28 September 1773, M.C., vol. 46, p. 909.

[97] Alexander Wynch in Council, 1 May 1775, M.C., vol. 51, p. 596.

an effective guarantee against their being overwhelmed by the logical consequences of their folly as well as duplicity.

Tanjore in the meantime found itself helpless against the machinations of its two powerful allies. It acknowledged Wallajah overlordship and paid tribute. Rajah Tuljaji tried a difficult task at an inopportune moment without adequate preparation when he went to war with the rulers of Ramnad and Sivaganga. Free from external threat, the Nawab found it easy to deal with the situation. Tuljaji neither possessed a powerful army nor received any external aid to help him extricate himself from a wider entanglement. In consequence, he fell into a trap, exposed against him by his own allies.

CHAPTER III

BRITISH SUPERSESSION OF THE WALLAJAHS

The elimination of Tanjore Raj from the political scene left the remaining allies, the English Company and the Nawab of Arcot, in confrontation with each other. The English retained their overwhelming military superiority, but Mohammad Ali strengthened his sovereign status with the acquisition of Tanjore. The policy of aid and alliance so far pursued by the Company paid due dividends, for it not only contributed to the isolation of the Nawab from all his possible allies but helped the consolidation of its influence in the Carnatic. The issue which now faced it was how to assert its political supremacy over the Nawab, its solitary ally on the coast. In this shift in policy of the English from aid and alliance to confrontation and subjugation of the Nawab, Tanjore played a conspicuous role.

By a decision taken at London, the English restored Tanjore to Rajah Tuljaji. They followed up this procedure with the elimination of the Wallajah interests from the kingdom and reduction of the state into a protectorate. The British supersession of the Wallajahs in Tanjore marked the correction of an error committed by the Madras Council in assisting the annexation of the principality with the Carnatic through the intervention of the Court of Directors at London, on the one hand, and the application of military superiority by the English for the rectification of a diplomatic defeat suffered by them at the hands of Mohammad Ali, on the other.

1. Restoration of Tanjore Raj

The assistance extended by the Madras Council to the Nawab of Arcot for the conquest of Tanjore caused considerable stir in England. Critics, particularly the Burkes, attributed this to the corruption among the servants of the Company. The supporters of the Nawab's policy, especially the Macphersons, on the other hand, defended the policy adopted by the Madras Council. There followed a pamphlet battle which continued for years.[1] The Nawab's money and intrigues worked behind this clash of interests, at times adding to the intensity of it. The Court of Directors

[1] H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 5 (no date, Delhi), p. 279.

now decided to interfere, for the issue presented a challenge to its policy as well as to its authority and excited public interest in the East India Company's affairs. The support given for the annexation of Tanjore violated its declared policy which forbade any assistance being given to the Nawab for the extension of his territorial limits. It was right in adopting this policy, for it wanted to create no potential rival in the Nawab. Secondly, the Madras Council disregarded the authority of the Court of Directors, for it took no authorization from London when it lent military support to Mohammad Ali for such an important course of action as annexation of Tanjore. The London authorities could find no justification either. They rightly asserted that the Rajah was entitled to receive British protection guaranteed to him by the treaty of 1762, that the delay in his payment of tribute to the Nawab should have been rectified by calling him to account and his aggression on the Marawa states could have been undone by a settlement of the dispute in a manner that seemed reasonable. Upon these grounds, the Court of Directors condemned the proceedings of Alexander Wynch and his Council and decided on the restoration of the state to Tuljaji as he held it in 1762 and to furnish security to his person and his family.[2] The Company drew this decision on the basis of two factors: one a fact while the other, a surmise that while the treaty of 1762 confirmed the Rajah's obligation to pay tribute to Arcot, it left his sovereignty unimpaired.[3] Definitely, it is wrong to assert that Tanjore retained its sovereignty, for the state had already acknowledged the overlordship of the Nawab and paid him tribute. Yet to treat the country as an independent entity served the purpose of the Anglo-Saxons, for they could establish such relation with it as they desired, without any hazard of violating the rights of the Nawab.

The Court of Directors promptly recalled Alexander Wynch from Madras. Considering the good services done by George Pigot to the British cause in the past at Madras, it asked him to stand once more at the helm. Twelve years had elapsed since he left the governorship of Madras. No longer a young man, still his brave spirit did not fail him. When he reached Madras in December 1755, he, to his dismay, found the changes, radical indeed, that had taken place. No more could he expect the association of the great colleagues who stood by his side during the period of trial presented by the wars with the French and the Indian powers. General Lawrence had died in England and Joseph

[2] T. Venkataswamy, *Tanjore District Manual*, vol. 2, pp. 805-807.

[3] Sir Archibald Campbell in Council, 6 April 1787, M.C., vol. 119, p. 15.

Smith retired from service full of honours. Sir Robert Fletcher, the Commander-in-Chief of the forces, appeared much a stranger with little regard for the Governor. The King's troops sent from England but placed in the service and pay of the Company displayed a tendency to ignore, if not defy the civil authority.[4] Despite these unfavourable circumstances, Lord Pigot proceeded to undo what Alexander Wynch and the powerful Arcot interests at Madras did in Tanjore.

On the assumption of the administration of Madras on the 10th of December 1775, Lord Pigot sought the co-operation of Mohammad Ali in carrying out the instructions of the Court of Directors on Tanjore. He explained to the Nawab the reasons which forced the Company to annul what the Madras Council did and requested the Nawab's concurrence to the rendition of Tanjore to Tuljaji. The Governor argued: 'Humanity to the wretched inhabitants distressed beyond measure by the miserable state in which the country now remains, without any established Government either of your Highness or the Rajah, justice to the Rajah who is scarcely better than a prisoner still and attention to the publick Honor make it absolutely necessary to carry into immediate effect the orders of the Company'.[5] The arguments of Lord Pigot, however, appeared neither convincing nor justifiable. The administration of the Nawab had functioned in the territory. The inhabitants, no doubt had been reduced to a deplorable state, but their distress did not prevent the English from imposing an oppressive financial burden on Tanjore soon after the state was restored to the Rajah's possession. No wonder the crocodile tears shed by Lord Pigot evoked no favourable response. Mohammad Ali bluntly demanded the revocation of the orders and rightly asserted that the decision of his ally injured not only his interests but also his dignity. Still the verbally powerful sovereign in the absence of any adequate military strength offered no resistance when Lord Pigot proceeded ahead with the implementation of the Company's decision.[6]

In February 1776 the British troops, facing no opposition, obtained possession of Tanjore from the Nawab's troops. On the 11th of April Lord Pigot presided over the restoration of the throne to Tuljaji. The Rajah regained possession of the districts of Koilody, Elangad, Vellum and Nagore together with other

[4] Mrs Frank Penny, *Fort St George, Madras*, pp. 173-174.

[5] Lord Pigot, 6 March 1776, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 25, p. 14.

[6] *Lord Pigot's Narrative*, 1776, p. 1.

territories, but the Nawab retained possession of Arni and Hanumantgudi, though these too formed parts of Tanjore in 1762.[7]

2. A British Protectorate

The Anglo-Saxons now exploited the new situation to the maximum advantage. Tuljaji who wrote to Lord Pigot that the Company's decision in his favour had given him 'a joy, which no Tongue is able to express, overwhelmed with the transport of joy, I am as one who is raised from the Dead',[8] now found his throne no bed of roses. In return for the services rendered to the Rajah, the Governor promptly required him to enter into a treaty with the Company.[9] The helpless prince had no alternative but to yield to the pressure. The new settlement that was signed imposed numerous restrictions and liabilities on Tanjore. It restricted the armed strength of the Rajah to a mere 500 men. The weakened state accepted British protection. The Company obtained the right to garrison the fort of Tanjore and to station its forces at other strategic places. In order to meet the expenses of the British forces stationed in Tanjore, the Rajah was required to pay four lakhs of pagodas, amounting to about twelve lakhs of rupees, every year, to the English. Besides, he was forced to cede the district of Devikottai adjoining the British settlement, already acquired from Pratap Singh. Subsequently the Madras Council compelled the Rajah to cede the important commercial centre of Nagore with its 277 villages yielding an annual revenue of two and a half lakhs of rupees, instead of the district of Devikottai. The treaty imposed limitations upon the foreign relations too. Tanjore agreed to render no assistance whatsoever to the enemies of the English and to enter into no relations with other powers without their consent.[10]

Tanjore re-emerged as a kingdom, but for no fault of its own, lost the substance of its independence, political as well as economic. No longer it had the freedom in foreign relations. While its armed

[7] Rajah Tuljaji, 26 December 1778, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 27, p. 386.

[8] Rajah Tuljaji, 13 February 1776, letter to Lord Pigot, M.C.C., vol. 25, p. 11.

[9] Warren Hastings, the Governor-General (1773-1785) of Fort William, criticised Lord Pigot for imposing the treaty upon Tanjore. (*Lord Pigot's Narrative*, p. 4). But this was particularly because of the ill-feeling in their relations.

[10] C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties etc.*, vol. 5, no. 47.

strength was curtailed its forts were garrisoned by foreign troops under the guise of protecting it. The kingdom lost the districts of Nagore, Hanumantgudi and Arni.[11] A British protectorate, the new status of Tanjore overshadowed its former position of a tributary to the Carnatic. The protection imposed a huge financial burden on the country. In 1762 Tanjore undertook to pay a nominal amount of four lakhs of rupees as annual tribute to its overlord, the Nawab. But in 1776 it was required to shoulder an enormous burden of twenty-two and a half lakhs of rupees—four lakhs as regular tribute to Arcot, twelve lakhs for meeting the expenses of the army to the Company, four lakhs, being a reduction in annual revenue on account of the Nawab's retention of Hanumantgudi and two and a half lakhs suffered as loss due to the cession of Nagore to the Company.

The English not only regained their influence in the state but extended it several-fold. While the treaty of 1762 recognised the Company as the guarantor of the independence of Tanjore subject to the payment of four lakhs of rupees as annual tribute to the Nawab, the settlement of 1776 elevated it to the status of the protector of the state. The new role assumed by the English crippled the sovereign rights of the Nawab for he lost his liberty to deal with his tributary except through the protector: a different course offered the possibility of a conflict with the English. In fact, the might of the Company superseded the legitimacy of the Wallajahs. The English received twelve lakhs of rupees every year from the Rajah, but as the Carnatic bordered on Tanjore and the military interests of both the territories appeared identical, the Company was not required to increase its military establishment in proportion to the new responsibility it undertook. The British forces stationed in Tanjore at its expense served a two-fold purpose; they defended the country against any external invasion and restrained the ruler from any attempt to get rid of the Company's authority. In addition, the English acquired a part of Tanjore and gained control over its foreign policy. The subsidiary system of Lord Wellesley not only elaborated these principles but applied them on an extensive scale.[12]

[11] The annual revenue from Hanumantgudi and Arni was estimated at four lakhs of rupees (Tuljaji, 26 December 1778, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 27, p. 386).

[12] The subsidiary system was already in force, but Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General (1798-1805), reduced it into a policy and applied it on Mysore, Hyderabad, Oudh and the Maratha countries. Under this system the Company gave protection to the ruler against internal and external threat

3. Repercussions of the Tanjore Episode

The Tanjore episode excited a long controversy in the political circles of London and Madras. In England it precipitated a pamphlet-battle. There followed a regular deluge of pamphlets issued by the Arcot interests in London or their opponents either explaining the rights of the Carnatic on Tanjore or refuting such arguments. Those who entertained a sympathy for Mohammad Ali asserted in defence of his interests that he had no power to emancipate himself from British control, as the Company's forces garrisoned all his forts, its officers commanded all his forces, the guns of Fort St George commanded the view of his palace and the English retained firm control over his person. Characterising the Nawab as the old, faithful and strenuous ally of England, they unhesitatingly declared that he was heart and soul for the British interests in India. The Rajah of Tanjore, on the other hand, was dubbed as the hereditary enemy of the Nawab and the English, and a person destitute of morality but devoted to superstition. On these grounds, they condemned the proceedings of the Court of Directors in favour of the rendition of Tanjore as unjust and impolitic.[13] This controversy continued beyond the year 1784, but it was more of academic interest than practical. Convinced of the advantages gained by the Company through the restoration of Tanjore to Tuljaji, the Court of Directors took no step to change the restored status of the state.

In Madras the Nawab and his creditors made a common cause against Lord Pigot. When he found his radiant hopes dashed to the ground, Mohammad Ali employed his vast powers of intrigue against the administration of Tuljaji in Tanjore and Lord Pigot in Fort St George. In an attempt to throw the administration of Tanjore into disorder, he not only destroyed the revenue records but even removed the revenue servants from the country.[14] The dissensions he created in Madras Council, on the other hand, affect-

and stationed an army apparently to protect the state but really to keep the ruler under restraint at his own expense. The subsidiary state, on its part, paid money or in lieu thereof ceded territory to enable the Company to maintain the force for its 'protection' and agreed to accept a British resident, to maintain no relations with other European powers and to enter into no alliances with Indian powers without the consent of the English.

[13] H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 5, p. 355.

[14] Tuljaji, 8 October 1778, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 26, pp. 266-267 and Tuljaji, 15 March 1786, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 35, p. 98.

ed the prestige of Lord Pigot and the stability of the Company's government at Madras.

A few issues that came up helped Mohammad Ali and his supporters in creating dissensions in the Madras Council. They were: the proceedings of Lord Pigot against Sir Robert Fletcher, the Commander-in-Chief, the claims of Paul Benfield to whom the Nawab made large assignments on the revenues of Tanjore and a dispute in Madras Council over the appointment of a Resident at Tanjore. Fletcher, a man of insubordinate disposition, assumed to himself the powers of acting independently of the Governor and drew up instructions to be carried out by the Company's servants in Tanjore. He forwarded them to the Madras Council for its consideration. Convinced that he was dictated to, Lord Pigot not only refused to send them to Tanjore but ordered the arrest of Fletcher. In the meantime, Benfield laid claim to the revenues of Tanjore on the plea that he advanced upwards of twenty-three lakhs of rupees to Mohammad Ali. As he did not explain how he came to possess such an enormous amount, Lord Pigot naturally considered it fraudulent.[15] On the 14th of June 1776 he moved a resolution in the Council declaring that as the claims of Benfield were private, they were no public concern. But several members of the Council, because of their personal interest in the affair, supported Benfield. The Council, in consequence, negatived the motion of Lord Pigot by seven votes to five. Induced by Mohammad Ali, it proceeded to adopt another resolution that the Nawab was entitled to receive the government's share of the standing crop in Tanjore. A further point of dispute came when the majority in the Council led by George Stratton decided to appoint Colonel James Stuart as the Resident at Tanjore against the wishes of Lord Pigot. As the Governor refused his approval, the majority sent an order signed by George Stratton and Henry Brooke directing Secretary Sullivan to appoint Stuart. Lord Pigot declared the order unconstitutional and moved a resolution in the Council for the purpose of ordering the suspension of Stratton and Brooke. Of the ten members of the Council, four voted for it, four against, while Stratton and Brooke did not vote as they were parties to the charge. Still the resolution was carried with the casting vote of the President. Now the majority staged a coup, placed Lord Pigot under arrest and suspended his supporters in the Council.[16]

[15] Mrs Frank Penny, *Fort St George, Madras*, p. 174.

[16] The arrest of Lord Pigot was effected this way. As the Governor was returning from Fort St George to the Government House, Lieutenant-Colonel Edington and Captain Lysaght stopped his carriage. Colonel Stuart, who was

Thereupon, Stratton with the support of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, assumed the governorship. The coup at Madras caused consternation in London. The Directors at first supported the policy of Lord Pigot but subsequently turned round and recalled him. Before the order reached Madras, he passed away. The Company now suspended Stratton and his majority and recalled them to England. The Resolution of the House of Commons in 1779 provided for their prosecution: the Court of King's Bench convicted Stratton and three of his followers, Brooke, Floyer and Mackay of misdemeanour and fined them £1,000 each but acquitted the two others. Thus the intrigues of Mohammad Ali against the proceedings of Lord Pigot ended in an anti-climax. However, his endeavour to regain possession of Tanjore ended in defeat.[17]

4. Token Sovereignty of the Nawab

The loss of Tanjore had left in its wake very adverse effects upon the fortunes of the Wallajahs. The Nawab rightly compared his position thus: 'Such are passengers on the sea, who after a long and dangerous voyage have the happy prospect of their Harbour, but in the midst of their joy are overtaken by a suddden and dreadful storm and driven again on the troubled ocean'.[18] It is true that the Company's intervention in Tanjore intercepted Mohammad Ali's rapid march to independence and forced his total retreat beyond the position he held formerly. But politics and diplomacy seldom know humanitarianism and honesty.

The British settlement with Tanjore in 1776 mentioned nothing about the Nawab's sovereignty on Tanjore. Were the treaties of 1762 and 1771 signed by Mohammad Ali with the Rajah of Tanjore still applicable? This question was left unanswered, despite the resurrection of the raj after the Nawab's annexation was effected. If it could be presumed that these settlements

sitting by the side of Lord Pigot and of whom the latter had no suspicion, stepped out and invited Lysaght to his place. Lysaght drove the carriage direct to St Thomas Mount and placed Lord Pigot in confinement. Due to excitement and infirmity, the health of the Governor failed. He was removed to Government House, but unable to rally, died on the 11th of May 1777. (Mrs Frank Penny, *Fort St George, Madras*, pp. 174-175).

[17] Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics* (Oxford, 1952), p. 318 and H. D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, vol. 3, (London, 1913), pp. 84-119.

[18] Mohammad Ali, 19 November 1777, representation to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 26, p. 283.

remained in force, the Nawab found his sovereignty reduced to the right of receiving an annual tribute of four lakhs of rupees. Refusal of the Rajah to pay tribute or any default in the payment thereof bound the Nawab to the unwelcome necessity of seeking the British aid, as the Company undertook the protection of the kingdom.

The rendition of Tanjore to the Rajah threw Mohammad Ali's finances into jeopardy. The Nawab raised huge loans for meeting the heavy expenditure incurred in giving presents to the English and the Marathas, assembling the forces for the expedition, repairing the forts in Tanjore, reorganising his army and carrying out a land survey in the conquered territory. The obligation he undertook for maintaining ten battalions of the British troops drained his already attenuated resources. Unable to liquidate his debt, Mohammad Ali made assignments on the revenues of Tanjore to his private creditors. Now the restoration of Tanjore to the Rajah threw the Nawab's assignees out of the revenues of Tanjore. Neither could Mohammad Ali maintain his large army nor disband it. The embarrassed Nawab found himself constantly disturbed by the cries of numerous religious and poor people who so long subsisted on his bounty, harassed by the disbanded troops and besieged by a crowd of creditors.[19]

The outbreak of the Second Mysore War (1780-1784) added to the misery of both Tuljaji and Mohammad Ali. British refusal to assist Mysore against a Maratha invasion in violation of the second article of the Treaty of Madras signed in 1769[20] and occupation of the French settlement of Mahe situated in Hyder Ali's territory precipitated the outbreak of war. Despite the responsibility of the English, the brunt of the conflict fell on Tanjore and the Carnatic. In 1780 the forces of Mysore drew a circle of desolation about twelve miles around the city of Tanjore and occupied most of the country. Hyder Ali ceded the occupied district of Nagore to the Dutch and won their alliance. For the next two years he held an undisturbed possession of most of Tanjore and a large part of the Carnatic. He garrisoned every fort in his possession, fortified the important pagodas, organised

[19] Mohammad Ali, 19 November 1777, representation to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 26, pp. 283-290.

[20] In 1769 Hyder Ali at the head of a large army swept threw Salem, Tanjore and Cuddalore and appeared within five miles of Fort St George. The panic-stricken Madras Council agreed to the conclusion of peace. The treaty provided for a mutual defensive alliance and the restoration of conquered territories.

a field force and collected the revenue.[21] Yet the Anglo-Saxons exploited the situation, created by the war, for tightening their hold on the Carnatic. They required the Nawab to contribute money and provisions for the military operations against Mysore, but Mohammad Ali, with his finances dislocated, found it an impossible task. Thereupon the Company forced him to assign the revenues of the Carnatic.[22] The Madras Council wanted to secure the assignment of Tanjore too, but the forces of Mysore exercised so effective a control over it that it found it difficult to execute the design.[23] In 1785, with the termination of war, the Madras Council surrendered the assignment to the Nawab. Now, the Company demanded the payment of all war-debt; or in lieu thereof to surrender his right of receiving tribute from Tanjore. Unable to raise any resources, the Nawab accepted the second alternative. He reserved for himself the right of receiving every year a grain of corn as a mark of his sovereignty over Tanjore and made over the tribute in full payment of every claim that might be brought against him in consequence of the war with Mysore.[24] The English thus reduced the Nawab's sovereignty over Tanjore to a mere symbolism.

5. A Turning Point in British Policy

The British intervention in Tanjore marks a transformation of the Company in its role from arbiter to protector and from spectator to participant. In its relations with the Nawab, it shifted its emphasis from legalism to militarism and from alliance to partnership.

The English restored Tanjore to its former status, but this was in form not in substance. They clipped the military strength of the state, garrisoned the forts and acquired a base for their military operations against other powers. So long a power with no definite material gain, the Company now assumed to itself large annual revenue from Tanjore and won access to its economic resources. The Anglo-Saxons helped the Nawab in isolating Tanjore from other Maratha powers through war and annexation. In turn, they excluded the sovereign's interests and deprived Tanjore of its right of maintaining relations with other powers.

[21] Lord Macartney in Council, 10 September 1781, M.C., vol. 76, p. 2440.
[22] C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties etc.*, vol. 5, p. 181.
[23] Lord Macartney in Council, 28 September 1781, M.C., vol. 76, p. 2692.
[24] Mohammad Ali, 21 July 1790, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 39, p. 351.

These tactics gained for the Company an absolute freedom of action in the internal affairs of the country.

The English abandoned the principles of legitimacy and adopted in their place those of militarism. They discarded the Nawab's sovereignty and interfered in Tanjore despite his opposition. Neither possessing any powerful army nor having any ally, the Nawab found his position unenviable. Too weak to resist the violation of his rights, he played one group against the other in the English circles, but this paid no dividends to him ultimately. An ally so long, the Company now asserted a partnership in the receipt of tribute from the vassal powers of the Carnatic too. While the sovereign received four lakhs of rupees as tribute from Tanjore, the protector acquired twelve lakhs a year. The Second Mysore War offered no material gain for the English, but they cleverly used it for wresting more advantages from their ally, the Nawab. Not content with securing the assignment of revenue of the Carnatic during the war, the Company acquired the residuary right of the Nawab in Tanjore, namely that of receiving four lakhs of rupees as the annual tribute.

CHAPTER IV

KING-MAKING AND POWER DIPLOMACY

Free from the Nawab's influence on Tanjore and secure in the control of the state, the Anglo-Saxons applied two principles: king-making and power diplomacy, for the extension of their authority over the country. They discarded a succession-settlement, effected by Tuljaji and elevated their nominee to the throne. The situation, thus created, assisted the Company wrest more rights from the state. In 1790 when the Third Mysore War (1790-1792) broke out, the English, against the wishes of the ruler and in violation of treaty engagements, assumed the revenues of the country. In the restoration of the possession of Tanjore to the Rajah, they found another opportunity to impose a fresh treaty. These political changes conferred upon the Company such an overwhelming influence that the rajahship lost all its glamour and the administration lost all its stability.

1. British Intervention in Succession Issue

By 1787 Tuljaji reached the evening of his life. As an old ruler he found himself afflicted by political as well as domestic problems. His treaty with the Company imposed so huge a financial burden and Hyder Ali's expedition during the Second Mysore War (1780-1784) wrought so wide-spread a desolation that he found it impossible to pay tribute to the Company. In 1785 when the tribute fell in arrears, the Madras Council appointed a Committee of Inspectors for the supervision of his revenue administration. This interfered with the internal government of the country.[1] Added to these, he had no issue to succeed to the throne. Eager to settle the succession before his death, he on the 22nd of January 1787 adopted as his son Prince Serfoji, a grandson of his near cousin by direct descent. The Rajah invested Serfoji with the insignia of royalty and took him to receive the address of the subjects. He appointed his half brother Amir Singh as the regent and instructed him to protect the boy-king.[2] On the 31st of January, a few days after the settlement of the succession issue, the old ruler departed the world.

[1] Sir A. Campbell in Council, 7 January 1787, M.C., vol. 115, pp. 49-60.

[2] Tuljaji, 26 January 1787, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 36, p. 7.

On the 31st of January, soon after hearing the sickness of Tuljaji, Governor Archibald Campbell instructed Alexander Macleod, the Resident at Tanjore, to suffer no person to be declared successor in the event of the death of the Rajah.[3] The Resident received the instructions only after Serfoji was proclaimed the successor and Tuljaji passed away. The Nawab, on the other hand, demanded the restoration of the country to him as the Rajah died childless, and as the sovereignty rested with him. He agreed to appropriate the revenue of the state for the payment of the military charges incurred in the Carnatic if the Company agreed to the proposal.[4] As the sovereign, he was entitled to lay this claim, but the Bengal Council promptly rejected it, stating that the Rajah held the country by inheritance and he exercised sovereignty subject to the payment of a tribute.[5] Thereupon Sir Archibald Campbell advised Amir Singh to carry on the administration, until all matters were fully considered and arranged, indicating thereby his determination to review the settlement made by Tuljaji.[6]

Sir Archibald Campbell reached Tanjore on the 5th of April 1787 and proceeded to examine whether the adoption was regular, obviously to find a loop-hole for reopening the issue. As a proper device, he assembled twelve pandits who claimed to possess full knowledge of the Hindu sacred works, the Sastras[7] and referred the issue for their decision. The pandits, partly because of fear of the regent and partly because of their expectation of getting rewards—which they confessed a few years later—held the adoption irregular. No doubt British designs and Amir Singh's intrigues worked behind the decision of the pandits. They declared that Tuljaji violated the rules by adopting a boy above the age of five—for Serfoji was aged ten—and the only son of his parents.

[3] Sir A. Campbell in Council, 31 January 1787, M.C., vol. 115, pp. 215-217.

[4] -do- 6 February 1787, M.C., vol. 115, p. 252.

[5] -do- 6 April 1787, M.C., vol. 119, pp. 15-16.

[6] Sir A. Campbell, 3 February 1787, letter to Amir Singh, M.C.C., vol. 36, pp. 10-11.

It is not possible to know why Tuljaji decided to adopt a son instead of permitting his half brother to succeed him. It was perhaps due to his religious motive that he wanted to have a son to perform the ceremonies for the dead according to custom. The legitimacy of Amir Singh was doubted but Tuljaji always publicly treated him as his brother (Sir A. Campbell in Council, 13 March 1787, M.C., vol. 115, p. 525).

[7] The Sastras deal with religious duties and civil law. The principal Sastras are the Dharma Sastras ascribed to Manu, Vishnu, Yajnavalkya and Narada. These works are dated between the first and the fifth centuries A.D.

Exceeding the limits of reference, they asserted that it was an act of injustice to deprive Amir Singh of his right to the throne. Sir Archibald Campbell welcomed this manipulated verdict of the pandits with gratification, won the consent of Amir Singh for the settlement of a new treaty and enthroned him on the 7th of April.[8]

It is needless to give serious consideration to the decision of the pandits, as J. Mill has done, for it was nothing but the product of the Company's endeavour to give a cover to its proceedings to reopen an issue otherwise settled. However, it was ironic that two entirely different considerations—one political expediency and the other, moral principle—guided the Madras and the Bengal Councils, respectively, to the same conclusion. Sir Archibald Campbell felt that an unqualified acceptance of the doctrine of adoption would be detrimental to British interests, for the same right might give the sovereignty of Tanjore to the Maratha Empire, if some future Rajah would adopt as his son the offspring of a Maratha ruler.[9] This was a reasonable argument from the point of view of English security in India. On the other hand, Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General (1786-1793), earnestly believed that the exclusion of a near relation like Amir Singh from the dignity to which he was entitled, by the adoption of a child who could entertain no pretensions from consanguinity was nothing but a measure repugnant to the British ideas of natural justice and humanity.[10] No doubt this was a correct approach on the basis of birth-right;

[8] Sir A. Campbell in Council, 6 April 1787, M.C., vol. 119, p. 15.

The Sanskrit law of adoption is evolved from two texts, those of Manu and Vasishta. Manu says 'He whom his father or mother gives to another as his son, provided that the donee have no issues, if the boy be of the same class, and affectionately disposed, is considered as a son given, the gift being confirmed by pouring water'. Vasishta says: 'A son formed of seminal fluids and of blood, proceeds from his father and mother as an effect from its cause. Both parents have power to sell, or to desert him. But let no man give, or accept, an only son, since he must remain to raise up a progeny for the obsequies of ancestors. Nor let a woman give, or accept, a son, unless with the assent of her lord. He who means to adopt a son must assemble his kinsmen, give humble notice to the king and then having made an oblation to fire with words from the Veda in the midst of his dwelling-house, he may receive, as his son, by adoption, a boy nearly allied to him, or (on failure of such) even one remotely allied. But if doubt arise, let him treat the remote kinsman as a Sudra. The class ought to be known, for through one son the adopter rescues many ancestors'. The adopter, however, must have no issue. (John D. Mayne, *A Treatise on Hindu Law and Usage*, (Madras, 1922), pp. 132-135.

[9] Sir A. Campbell in Council, 13 March 1787, M.C., vol. 115, pp. 525-530.

[10] Sir A. Campbell in Council, 6 April 1787, M.C., vol. 119, p. 5.

Lord Cornwallis, himself a typical representative of the British aristocracy, always gave importance to it. But an obstacle to the acceptance of this version was that the mother and the widows of Tuljaji questioned the legitimacy of Amir Singh's birth and considered him as an illegitimate son of the late ruler.[11] Besides, Amir Singh had already accepted the settlement made by Tuljaji. In his letter to the Madras Council dated the 10th of February 1787, he made it pointedly clear that he assumed the management of the country at the wishes of the late Rajah, that he would endeavour to promote the welfare of the people and give satisfaction to Rajah Serfoji and that he would instruct the prince in the principles of politics.[12] These facts establish the unjustifiability of the British intervention in the succession issue. Yet the Madras Council decided to examine whether the adoption was regular just to find a way for the promotion of its designs. If the adoption appeared regular it wanted to withhold its confirmation of the succession and to keep the claim of the Nawab to the sovereignty open so as to serve as a perpetual check upon Tanjore.[13] But the decision which the Company could obtain from the pandits enabled it to bypass the Wallajah sovereignty, to enthrone Amir Singh and to settle a treaty along the lines of its imperialistic aspirations.

2. The Treaty of 1787

The Tanjore treaty settled by Sir Archibald Campbell on the 10th of April 1787 consisted of sixteen articles. It stated as its objectives the consolidation of peace in the coast and the establishment of a defence system under British guidance. The Company assumed the right to direct the war, to command the forces, to occupy forts and to dismantle them whenever it felt it as a necessity.

The first article declared that the friends and enemies of either party were the common friends and enemies. The second article required the Rajah to contribute four lakhs of star pagodas, divided into six instalments a year for the support of the 'military peace establishment'. The third article stated that as the fixation of four lakhs was proportioned to the estimated revenue of ten lakhs, it was liable to increase in proportion to the improvement of the collections.

The next three articles established guarantees for the punctual payment of the agreed contribution. Thus the fourth article

[11] Draupadi Bai, mother of Tuljaji, 5 September 1790, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 40, p. 86.

[12] Amir Singh, 18 February 1787, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 36, p. 50.

[13] Sir A. Campbell, 13 March 1787, M.C., vol. 115, pp. 525-530.

authorised the Company to collect the revenue of any districts, required for the realisation of arrears if the Rajah's payment to the amount of 50,000 star pagodas or more went in default for more than a month. It empowered it to appoint receivers to collect the revenue from the Rajah's amuldars in the assumed districts and to exercise the powers, needed for the enforcement of collections. The fifth article bound the Rajah to place his revenue servants at the service of the English for the collection of revenue. The sixth article, on the other hand, required the Company to preserve the honour and dignity of the Rajah inviolate in the event of the assumption of revenue of his territories.

The latter part of the treaty contained clauses, which the Company found essential for dealing with any emergency created by war. Thus the seventh article granted right to the English to take over the direction and conduct of any war, fought on the coast, and to apply four-fifths of the revenues of Tanjore, in addition to those of the Carnatic and the Northern Circars for military expenses. The eighth article directed the Rajah to pay to the Company during the war four-fifths of his revenues to be applied in such manner as the Madras Council thought proper for common security and to pay one-fifth of the total war-debt if there remained any. The ninth article vested with the English the right to appoint inspectors to examine the accounts of the revenue for removing any doubt of misappropriation of the said four-fifths of the revenues for purposes other than war and to appoint receivers for the direct collection of revenue if the Rajah diverted the said revenue from the discharge of the military expenses. The tenth article stipulated that after the termination of hostilities the said four-fifths would continue to be applied for the discharge of war-expenses until the Rajah's proportion of one-fifth of it was completely paid. The eleventh article provided for the restoration of the revenues to the Rajah and the recall of the Company's receivers from Tanjore on the full payment of the said proportion. The twelfth article made it clear that during the application of the revenue for the payment of the war-debt, the articles from the second to the fifth of this treaty would remain dormant, but would regain validity on the full discharge of it in the stipulated proportions.

The thirteenth article guaranteed British military support to the Rajah's administration on requisition, in which case, he was required to meet the additional expenses attending the operations of the forces. The next three articles provided for the liquidation of the Rajah's debts and the arrears of tribute. It bound the Rajah

to pay every year 1,05,715 pagodas for the liquidation of arrears of tribute, which he owed to the Nawab and that together with interest amounted to 12,57,142 (for the period from 1776 to 1787) and a sum of 1,14,285 in payment of an annual tribute to Arcot and further amount of 80,000 for the clearance of debts payable to the Company and the British subjects, approximately calculated as four lakhs. The fifteenth article provided for ascertaining exactly the amount of the private debts owed by the Rajah to the British subjects and fixed for it a simple interest of twelve per cent.[14] The sixteenth article required the Rajah to pay the arrears of tribute and the annual tribute, payable to Arcot, to Fort St George, as the Nawab had assigned them to the Company in lieu of his payment of his debt incurred during the Second Mysore War.[15]

This settlement complemented the defence system formulated by the Carnatic Treaty of 1787. In peace as well as in war the ruler was compelled to contribute towards the military expenses of the Company. Yet the treaty did not require the Company to make contribution proportionate to its resources or to share the spoils of war with the contributor. If the Company incurred a large expenditure during a war, it could force the ruler to discharge his part of it, but if it incurred a comparatively small expenditure, it was not called to grant a proportionate reduction from the payments fixed for the Rajah. These facts together with the control of forts, army and resources guaranteed the privileged position of the Company. Besides, the Treaty confirmed and enlarged the financial obligations, already undertaken by the Rajah under the settlement made by Lord Pigot in 1776. While no attempt was made to restore Arni and Hanumantgudi, the Rajah was required to pay the tribute together with the arrears. Of the total estimated income of ten lakhs of star pagodas a year, Tanjore was left with only three lakhs of rupees for the expenses of the administration and the palace establishments. Naturally internal administration suffered. Had his contribution to the defence set-up been made a fixed amount, the Rajah could have had an incentive to improve his resources; but the provision for proportion-

[14] The private debts payable to British subjects totalled 2,52,960 pagodas. On the 12th of July 1787 the said sum together with interest was calculated at 4,76,087 pagodas, 25 fanams and 53 cash. This was declared as the principal debt. (Amir Singh, 29 September 1792, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 43, p. 275).

[15] *The Treaties between the Hon'ble East India Company and the Rajah of Tanjore etc.* (Madras, 1859): The Tanjore Treaty of 1787.

ate increase nullified such a scope. Indeed Amir Singh paid a heavy price for the throne.

Perhaps Sir Archibald Campbell himself felt that he imposed too heavy a burden upon Tanjore. He, therefore, suggested several measures in order to enable Tanjore to sustain the situation it faced. Thus he directed the Rajah to reorganise the revenue administration of the state, to institute proper inspection of revenue accounts, to reduce the allowance made to charitable institutions, to levy a tax on the rent-free lands given to the Brahmins, and to establish an open court of justice for the eradication of corruption. In addition, he urged the Rajah to discourage the evil practice of sati.[16] But it does not appear that Amir Singh took any positive interest in the implementation of these reforms. The tradition-dominated ruler declared that the establishment of an open court appeared contrary to custom and that the persuasion of the women to give up the practice of sati violated the injunctions of the Sastras.[17] The heavy drain of resources unattended with any proportionate improvement of revenue rendered a conflict between the Rajah and the Madras Council over the issue of contributions inevitable.

3. The Assumption

The financial burden imposed upon Tanjore prepared the ground for further intervention by the Company in the internal affairs of the state. Within a year of the settlement of the treaty of 1787 Amir Singh pleaded his inability to pay his contributions. Three lakhs of pagodas accumulated as arrears.[18] Attributing the default in payment to the profligate conduct of the Rajah's administration,[19] the Madras Council appointed three native managers for the collection of taxes and realised the arrears. During this period of Company's intervention, the ruler received 10,000 pagodas a month for his private expenses.[20] Unprovided for by the treaty of 1787, this take-over of the collections by the English marked another instance of the infringement of the Rajah's rights.

[16] Sir A. Campbell, 10 April 1787, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 36, p. 65.

[17] Amir Singh, 21 April 1787, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 36, pp. 83-105.

[18] Sir A. Campbell, 10 April 1787, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 36, p. 65.

[19] Amir Singh, 28 May 1790, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 41, p. 334.

[20] E. John Holland in Council, 25 September 1789, M.C., vol. 130, p. 2637.

The Anglo-Saxons subjected the Rajah to personal indignities too. In 1790 Sir Charles Oakeley, the Governor, deprived him of the right of direct correspondence with Madras Presidency and instructed him to send his letters through the Resident. Amir Singh protested, but it was in vain.[21] Indirectly this brought the Rajah under the influence of the British officer. G. H. Ram, the Resident, took advantage of the situation to obtain from the Rajah a monopoly in the purchase and sale of indigo in the state. When Amir Singh complained to Sir Charles Oakeley against the Resident, the Governor wantonly blamed the Rajah. Oakeley unhesitatingly declared that Amir Singh seduced Ram to betray the important trust committed to the latter.[22] Subsequently, the Madras Council took more steps aimed at the degradation of the Rajah in the estimate of the inhabitants. In 1791 it established a separate provision of 25,000 pagodas a year for Serfoji and the three widows of Tuljaji and forced the Rajah to pay the amount through the Company. As a next step Governor William Meadows, the successor of Oakeley in the Presidency of Madras, removed Prince Serfoji from the Rajah's palace and placed him under the care of Reverend Swartz, a missionary of the Danish Mission.[23] No doubt, this proceeding portended evil for Amir Singh, obviously because it was aimed at the creation of a division of interests in the state. Yet when the Rajah raised the issue with the Court of Directors, the Madras Council to the latter's query, declared 'that he (Amir Singh) could not, if left to the genuine dictates of his own mind, possibly imagine that we had the smallest design in favour of Serfojee or his relations, that could be inconsistent with our Duty to the Company or with those Engagements that had his Excellency on the musnud (throne)—that our anxiety to secure the family of the late Rajah against the feelings of want could not with any justice be construed into a design of creating rivalship'.[24] But the subsequent proceedings of the Madras Council belied this pious assertion.

The outbreak of the Third Mysore War (1790-1792) added to the embarrassment of Amir Singh. In April 1790 in consequence of Tipu Sultan's attack on Travancore, an ally of the

[21] Amir Singh, no date, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 39, p. 127.

[22] Sir Charles Oakeley, 11 December 1790, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 40, p. 226.

[23] Amir Singh, 25 February 1791, Complaint to Court of Directors, M.C.C., vol. 41, pp. 204-219.

[24] Madras Council, 14 July 1791, Political Despatches to England, vol. 1, pp. 289.

Company, Lord Cornwallis formed a triple alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam and mobilised forces against Mysore. Tipu Sultan advancing along the banks of the Kaveri, laid Srirangam waste. However, he suddenly withdrew when the forces of the coalition threatened Mysore. The incursion was, no doubt, isolated and the war was confined largely to the territories of Mysore. Tanjore furnished four-fifths of its revenues in support of the British military operations, as required by the treaty of 1787. Still the Company took over the revenue administration in September 1790.[25] Amir Singh declared the Company's intervention as improper, but this tardy remonstrance had no effect.[26] The Madras Council, however, guaranteed the right of the ruler to inspect revenue accounts and promised the payment of one-fifth of the revenues as stipulated by the treaty.[27]

It cannot be denied that the Company blatantly exceeded the authority acquired by it under the treaty of 1787. Concerned at its own financial embarrassment caused by the Mysore War, it proceeded ahead with wholesale assumption without establishing that Amir Singh diverted or secreted the four-fifths of his revenues for purposes other than war. It was true that the contributions went irregular at times, but the remedy prescribed by the treaty was the assumption of the revenues of such districts as were needed for the realisation of the arrears. The Madras Council, in an attempt to justify its intervention, charged the Rajah of oppression, but had this been so, the Company, by refusing financial relief, failed to do what it could do to correct a sad situation. In fact, the paucity of time for the recuperation of the country from the devastating blow inflicted by the Second Mysore War, and the failure of the ruler to reorganise the administration threw the public finances into disorder. Amir Singh granted a concession in taxation ranging from four per cent to twelve in his endeavour to encourage cultivation.[28] Such a beneficial reform would have improved the economy in the long run, but the heavy and constant pressure upon his finances rendered the introduction of benevolent measures risky, as the treaty provided for so drastic a step as the assumption

[25] William Medows in Council, 24 September 1790, M.C., vol. 139, p. 3346.

[26] Amir Singh, 8 December 1790, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 40, p. 235.

[27] William Medows, 25 November 1790, letter to Nawab of Arcot, M.C.C., vol. 40, p. 200.

[28] Amir Singh, 3 February 1793, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 44, p. 68.

of revenue on default of any payments. In fact the English took advantage of their denial of an opportunity to the Rajah for the improvement of his resources and the outbreak of Mysore War for intervening in administration. This triumph of the principle of force over treaty-obligations marked a further stage in the British ascendancy in Tanjore.

The Board of Assumed Revenue, created for the administration of revenue, appointed two collectors for Tanjore and exercised supervision over the collections. It entertained in its service the servants of the Rajah whose services were found absolutely necessary.[29] The new administration portioned out the districts into small allotments and farmed them out for one-year periods with the object of minimising the risk against transactions and evasion. It took precautions against renting out the estate to the overgrown renters who for long had excelled themselves in exaction. The collectors set up a court of justice and functioned jointly in deciding the cases of property. However, the Board, indifferent to public welfare, concerned at the temporary nature of the management, anxious to raise as much revenue as possible and ignorant of local customs, made no attempt to reorganise the method of collection, separate revenue from the other branches of public activity, protect the rights of the ryots against oppression, improve irrigation facilities and establish direct contact with the inhabitants. It compromised with the prevailing system, improving where it could do something without encountering complications.[30] The jurisdiction limited to the exercise of general supervision, it granted vast discretion to the persons on the field. Naturally these glaring anomalies reacted against the interests of the peasantry. Still, the Company held on orderly possession of the country because of the failure of Tipu Sultan in creating any disturbance, the inability of the Rajah in raising any opposition and the tendency of the inhabitants in attributing their ordeals to fate.[31]

The Third Mysore War was of short duration. The British forces and their allies marched on Mysore from different directions. General Stuart occupied Dindigul, Colonel Oldham took Erode, and Colonel Floyd captured Satyamangalam—the key posts of Mysore. In February 1792 Lord Cornwallis advancing from Vellore, reduced Bangalore to submission. Reinforced by the Marathas and the Nizam's army, he next threatened Seringa-

[29] William Medows in Council, 7 August 1790, M.C., vol. 137, p. 2607.
[30] William Medows in Council, M.C., vol. 154, p. 5678.
[31] -do- 28 January 1791, M.C., vol. 144, p. 465.

patnam, the capital. Tipu Sultan sued for peace and on the 19th of March 1792 signed the Treaty of Seringapatnam, surrendering half of his territories to the victorious powers. The English acquired Dindigul, Baramahal, Coorg and Malabar, while the Nizam and the Marathas annexed the territory extending from River Krishna to beyond River Pennar and that situated between the Krishna and the Wardha, respectively. The territorial gains, besides adding an extensive region to the possessions of the English, gave a defensive barrier to their empire in South India. The resources of Tanjore, though in a limited measure, contributed to the triumph of the Company over Mysore but the Rajah gained nothing except the burdens of war.

4. The Tanjore Treaty of 1793

In September 1792 Sir Charles Oakeley, the Governor of Fort St George, announced the Company's decision to abrogate the treaty of 1787 and to settle another. Amir Singh welcomed this decision for, he expected moderation in the new settlement unlike the previous treaty.[32] But the Madras Council, without consulting the Rajah, prepared a draft of a treaty and sent it to him for his assent. As the proposed settlement shattered his expectation of obtaining favourable terms, Amir Singh conveyed his fear that it would plunge the country into bankruptcy.[33] The Madras Council, on the other hand, refused to make any concession and asserted that the Rajah could fulfil the conditions entered into the draft treaty through a prudent management of the public affairs.[34] Amir Singh, withholding his consent to the proposed treaty, requested Lord Cornwallis to restore the country to him as the war with Mysore had ended. But the Governor-General directed the Rajah to comply with the proposed terms as the condition of the surrender of assumption. With no alternative found open to him, the helpless ruler gave his assent on the 11th of July 1793.[35] Still, the Madras Council, annoyed at the hesitation of the Rajah in giving his concurrence to the treaty, declared that until his temper and conduct had changed to such an extent as to afford a

[32] Amir Singh, 17 September 1792, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 43, pp. 265-267.

[33] -do- 11 October 1792, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 43, p. 315.

[34] Sir C. Oakeley, 29 September 1792, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 43, p. 275.

[35] Amir Singh, 7 October 1795, complaint to Court of Directors, M.C.C., vol. 46, p. 125.

reasonable ground of hope that the interests of the English and the prosperity of the people would not suffer—as if it had concern for the welfare of the inhabitants—by a restoration, he could never regain the control of the country.[36] The English held the control of Tanjore for six months after the Rajah gave his assent to the imposed treaty, in contravention of the terms of the settlement of 1787. At last on the 12th of July 1793 the Madras Council restored the country to the Rajah, on the suggestion of the Bengal Council that: 'it would be more suitable to our national character to hazard an error on the side of lenity than to expose ourselves to the imputation of having treated him (Amir Singh) with excessive rigour'.[37] The Company, nevertheless, utilised the surrender of assumption for the enforcement of a unilaterally formulated treaty on Tanjore.

The treaty consisted of ten articles. It annulled the treaty of 1787 with a confession of truth that the resources of Tanjore were inadequate to enable the Rajah to perform his financial engagements. The first article declared that the friends and enemies of either party were the friends and enemies of both. The subsequent articles dealt with the military powers of the Company, the financial obligations of Tanjore and the 'protection' of the Rajah's interests—though there remained no substantial interests to be protected.

The second article entitled the Company to maintain a force for the defence of Tanjore under the entire control of the English. The third article authorised the Company, in the name of the security of the state, to garrison all the forts. In the event of war breaking out in the Carnatic or in the contiguous territories, the Company had the right to assume the revenue and collect it during the period of hostilities. It agreed to pay every year one lakh of star pagodas in addition to one-fifth of the net revenue to the Rajah during the period of assumption and to restore the possession of the country at the conclusion of war.

The fourth article bound the Rajah to pay to the English every year 3,50,000 star pagodas as his contribution to the defence system, 1,14,985 as the tribute transferred to the Company by the Nawab and 60,000 towards the liquidation of debts estimated at

[36] Sir C. Oakeley, 15 January 1793, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 44, p. 15.

[37] Madras Council, 20 September 1793, Political Despatches to England, vol. 2, p. 243.

4,76,087 pagodas, twenty-five fanans and fifty-eight cash until it was completely cleared. The fifth article suspended the payment of tribute of 1,14,285 star pagodas for three years beginning from the 12th of July, 1792 in order to help the Rajah to rehabilitate his declining finances. However, it provided that the arrears of tribute for the said three years amounting to 3,42,855 star pagodas would be added to the debts and it required the Rajah to pay along with his other payments a sum of 50,000 a year from the 12th of July 1792 towards the liquidation of the said arrears and to renew the payment of tribute on the expiration of the said three years. The sixth article clarified that the Rajah was to pay annually a total of 4,60,000 star pagodas—3,50,000 as his share of military expenses, 60,000 on account of private debts, and 50,000 to clear arrears of tribute, all in nine instalments—30,000 on 1st November, 40,000 on 1st December, 40,000 on 1st January, 50,000 on 1st February, 50,000 on 1st March, 50,000 on 1st April, 50,000 on 1st May, 50,000 on 1st June and 1,00,000 on 1st July. At the end of the three-year concession period when the payment of the tribute would resume, a proportionate increase and on the liquidation of the debt a proportionate deduction would take place in each instalment.

The seventh article stipulated that if any of the instalments remained unpaid or not fully paid within fifteen days after the date specified for payment, the Company had the right to assume management and make collection of revenue from any or all of the districts of Mannargudi, Tiruvadi, Mayavaram and Pattukkottai, together estimated to yield an annual revenue of 5,87,113 star pagodas. On the full realisation of arrears, the assumed districts would revert to the Rajah's management. Yet, on a second default, any or all of the said districts would fall under assumed administration in full and remain so, permanently; in which case the Company would give credit for the net revenue and adjust with the annual accounts. The Rajah, on his part, agreed to make no assignment (tuncaw) on the mortgaged districts to any, but if any tuncaw existed on the occasion of the assumption of revenue by the Company, it would have no value.

The eighth article provided for British military support to the authority of the Rajah—though he retained only a flicker of authority—and the good order and government of his country on a public representation from his circar, in which case it required him to defray the additional expenses of the troops so employed. The ninth article assured the ruler that he would receive regular information regarding the making of war or peace wherein the

Company might engage and the interests of Tanjore would come in and that the English would consider him as their ally in all treaties affecting his territory. It directed the Rajah to enter into no negotiation or political correspondence with any foreign power other than the English without their consent. The tenth article, the last one, required the ruler to set apart 11,000 star pagodas and 3,000 every year for the support of Prince Serfoji and each of the three widows of Tuljaji, respectively.[38]

The treaty of 1793 was not of unmixed curse to Tanjore. It granted a marginal relief to the strained finances of the kingdom. The settlement brought down the annual contribution to the common defence system from four lakhs of star pagodas to three and a half lakhs. It required the Rajah to pay 60,000 star pagodas towards the clearance of his debt instead of 80,000. This must be attributed to the declining size of his insolvency. The treaty mentioned nothing about the arrears of tribute to the Nawab and it appears that the Rajah paid them in full. In times of assumption of revenue, the ruler was allowed to have one lakh of star pagodas in addition to one-fifth of the net revenue. Except for these provisions, the treaty conferred upon the English substantial advantages. The Company retained for itself the military control of the state. It ensured for itself the punctual receipt of contributions, for it could assume revenues of the listed territories if the Rajah committed default in payment and retain them in perpetuity on a second default. The Company obtained the right to assume the revenues in times of war without any necessity of establishing that the Rajah diverted four-fifths of his revenue for purposes other than war. This provision marked an improvement over the previous stipulation from British point of view in the light of the experience it gained during the Third Mysore War, for in 1790 the Company violated the treaty of 1787 when it proceeded with assumption. Thereby it indirectly imparted legal sanction to the encroachments which it made upon the rights of the ruler. The settlement appeared eminently suitable to the period when the English had been engaged in major conflicts, for it, under the guise of the common defence system, ensured for itself the steady flow of provisions and absolute political control of the state. The silence of the treaty about the gains of war was meaningful, for it left the Anglo-Saxons, the custodians of war, entitled to their sole acquisition.

[38] *The Treaties between the Hon'ble The East India Company and the Rajah of Tanjore, etc.*, 1859: The Treaty of Tanjore, 1793.

5. Interventionism

The period from 1787 to 1793 witnessed repeated British interventions in the internal affairs of Tanjore. In fact, the Company reduced interventionism into an accepted practice. This policy made no distinction between the ruler's private rights or his public interests. Adoption was not only an accepted custom of the land but a private right of the individual. The adopted son was entitled to the right of inheritance. In this custom, the English found a potential threat to their security, for an adoption of a son from the ruling house of another territory in India would have made Tanjore a part of it. Overtly the English did not deny the right of adoption or violate it but found a way out by declaring it irregular. The public interests of the Rajah too experienced repeated threats on account of the Company's take-over of the revenue administration. The English assumed the collection of revenue either to realise the arrears of payments or to ensure an uninterrupted supply of provisions in order to meet the exigencies created by war.

While the self interest of the Company served as the motivating force of these interventions, the military control established over the country helped it in carrying out this policy without any opposition. In addition to the assumption of the administration, some of the measures of the English proved detrimental to the ruler's dignity. The Madras Council deprived the Rajah of his right of direct communication with the Governor and forced him to correspond through the Resident. This amounted to the elevation of the office of the Resident at the expense of the prestige of the king. It is not certain whether the English at this time decided to hold out Serfoji as a rival to Amir Singh. But the removal of this prince from the palace was a step aimed at keeping Amir Singh under constant alarm.

Interventions proceeded along a chain process of utilising the bye-product of one act of commission for the next. The Anglo-Saxons implemented this strategy very successfully. Apparently on the willing Amir Singh, they imposed a burdensome treaty. Before long the Rajah found his task unsustainable. His contributions to his imperial masters fell in arrears. Now the Madras Council interfered to set the matter right. Still the Rajah's administration went irregular and the outbreak of Mysore War invited the assumption of revenue. As the condition of the surrender of the assumption the Company exacted the next treaty from the Rajah.

It does not appear that the English contemplated the annexation of the country during this period. It is true that no powerful impediment stood in the way. Still such a course of action amounted to a superfluity. Primarily what the Company needed was the wealth of the country for its major engagements. The treaty itself ensured its steady flow. The assumption of the administration of revenue gave a limited scope of training its servants, yet unfamiliar with the customs of the people, the English seemed reluctant to take over all the branches of administration. Added to these, the Company would have anticipated an adverse reaction to an annexation from the other Maratha powers.

Chapter V

THE ANNEXATION

The growth of British influence in Tanjore had culminated in the annexation. By 1794 the ascendancy gained by the English over the different shades of Rajah's authority resulted in a dual system of government. The rights acquired from the Nawab for the collection of tribute and from the Rajah for the military control of his territory and for the receipt of a large part of his revenue every year contributed to this division of powers. The Rajah retained for himself the right to collect all taxes—but not to spend all the amount—, police authority and judicial administration. Deprived of military authority and burdened with huge contributions, he found his task quite onerous. His imperial masters now decided to do away with even the shadow of his authority. They directed him to cede the districts, mortgaged as guarantee to his payments. But Amir Singh refused. Thereupon they declared the adoption of Serfoji as regular and crowned him the ruler, but took away his domains. This marked the extinction of the Maratha principality of Tanjore.

1. A Shift in Policy

The procedure of the Company for the annexation of the state was marked by a shift in policy. So long it sought the acquisition of political influence. Triumphant in this course of action, it diverted its attention to the acquisition of territorial rights.

Anxious to take possession of the mortgaged districts of Mayuram, Mannargudi and Trivedi, the English resorted to mud-slinging, one of the weapons in their diplomatic armoury. They brought forward a series of accusations against the Rajah's administration. Governor Lord Hobart (1794-1796) charged Amir Singh that he appointed Shiva Rao, a corrupt person, as his minister,[1] committed his revenue into the hands of extortioners,[2]

[1] Accepting the one-sided assertion of the Madras Council, the Dean of Winchester, in the *Cambridge History of India*, states that the land was grievously oppressed by Shiva Rao, the minister of Amir Singh and that the mortgaged districts were brought to the verge of ruin.—H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 5, p. 360. But the author conveniently takes no notice of British exactions which were really responsible for the ruination of the country.

[2] Lord Hobart, 17 November 1795, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 46, p. 172.

assigned revenue to creditors,[3] and neglected the establishment of public courts.[4] Holding him guilty of violating the provisions of the treaty of 1792, the Governor, without any hesitation whatsoever, directed him to surrender the revenue administration of the mortgaged districts.

The procedure of Lord Hobart betrayed a want of candour so glaring in his policy towards Tanjore. The Rajah retained for himself an unquestionable right to appoint a minister of his choice and to judge his honesty. Burdened with large payments, it was true that he made assignments for the loans he raised, but the treaty of 1792 prescribed no punishment. The Company, observing no principles of equity, forced Amir Singh to pay for the interval between September 1792—the date given for the treaty of 1793—and July 1793—in which month the country was actually restored to him—, a period of assumption during which the Company collected the revenue. When the ruler requested the Madras Council to grant him a concession for this period of its administration,[5] he received a strange reply that the revenue of Tanjore would increase under an efficient management without injustice or rigour towards the inhabitants, that the bounty of nature towards the country equalled and perhaps even exceeded any other territory in the world and that if his request were conceded, the amount so saved would be misapplied. Lord Hobart even warned the Rajah that the Company would assume the whole administration if the latter permitted the payment to go on default.[6] Amir Singh in reply rightly explained that the Company's requisition for payments even for the period of its occupation of the country, shortage of collections during the lean months and the necessity of paying as high an interest as twelve per cent to the creditors because of his waning influence forced him to raise loans. He pleaded that 'though a poor Rajah like myself looks in confidence to the Honourable Company for the continuance of his honour, credit and protection yet, if the period be transgressed or a war excited, it is stipulated by the Treaty of 1792 that he shall be deprived of his country, and his country being liable to forfeiture on many other accounts, each day brings

[3] Amir Singh, 25 January 1796, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 47, p. 51.

[4] -do- 20 January 1796, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 47, p. 30.

[5] Amir Singh, 11 November 1795, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 46, p. 162.

[6] Lord Hobart, 17 November 1795, letter to Madras Council, vol. 46, 172.

with it some new act'.[7] The Rajah, in fact, established a court, but it did not come up to the expectations of the Madras Council as it did not function as an open court. However, he heard complaints of the people in his palace and settled them according to custom. Still the entreaties of the helpless ruler fell on deaf ears.

In January 1796, at the instructions of Lord Clarke, the Governor (1796-1797), Alexander Macleod, the Resident, directed the Rajah to assign the revenues of his country for a period of five years in return for Company's permission to his retaining Shiva Rao in his service. As this amounted to a wanton interference in his internal administration, unauthorised by any treaty, Amir Singh rightly asserted that the right of punishing his servants rested with him and as he paid the tribute punctually, the English had no right to demand assignment of his revenues. Thereupon, Macleod warned the Rajah that unless he complied with the orders of the Company, the fate of the Setupati[8] would overtake him and cautioned him that Serfoji was staying at Madras. These threats seemed ominous, still Amir Singh firmly declared that he would not relinquish even a single village.[9]

On the 22nd of January Macleod presented a draft of a fresh treaty written in English, which required the Rajah to cede the districts of Mayuram, Mannargudi and Tiruvadi in lieu of his annual payments to the Company. This proposed settlement entitled the ruler to receive the balance of the net revenue after making deductions of the customary contributions. Amir Singh replied that there was no necessity of setting aside the treaty of 1792 and to sign a new one, particularly because he did not fail in his payments. Still he agreed to consider the terms if he could get a Marathi translation of the draft. On the 23rd of January Macleod sent his dubash with a Marathi translation of the draft to the palace. After careful consideration, the Rajah rightly observed that the Company appeared to cherish a desire to take his country from him by some means or other. As Amir Singh appeared reluctant to sign the treaty, the Resident brought his

[7] Amir Singh, 9 June 1796, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 47, p. 188.

[8] In February 1795 the British forces invaded Ramnad, deposed Setupati Muthuramalinga Tevar and imprisoned him at Trichinopoly. Lord Hobart annexed the territory and issued a proclamation to that effect. (Madras Council, 23 April 1795, Political Despatches to England, vol. 2, pp. 351-360).

[9] Amir Singh, 20 January 1796, letter to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 47, p. 30.

troops and surrounded the palace. The people, taken by alarm, came to the rescue of their king, but Amir Singh directed them to offer no resistance. All the time, the Rajah remained in silence absorbed in melancholy and sorrowful reflection. A British soldier with his musquet entered the palace and advanced as far as the seat of the Rajah. Now Macleod appeared again and demanded from Amir Singh a categorical reply, whether the latter would sign the document or not. For fear what the troops intended to perpetrate and seeing his family overcome with grief, the Rajah lost his presence of mind and gave his signature and seal to the treaty. Thereupon, the Resident expressed his great pleasure, asked the Rajah to retain Shiva Rao in his service and to make no payment after February 1796.[10] The Madras Council took possession of the three districts and reported to Bengal Council that the Rajah signed the treaty not only with willingness but also with pleasure.

Amir Singh represented his grievance to the Councils of Madras and Bengal. The Madras Council, the author of the enactment, replied that as the state was approaching ruin, it found it indispensable to rescue the mortgaged districts from the baneful effects of a destructive administration and rejected the ruler's assertion that Macleod employed force.[11] On the other hand, Sir John Shore, the Governor-General of Bengal (1793-1798), upon a detached assessment of the pros and cons of the development, rejected the Madras Council's version that the Rajah signed the treaty not only with willingness but also with pleasure. He rightly concluded that the Madras Council intimidated the prince into a settlement. In support of his verdict the Governor-General pointed out that there was neither any evidence of any series of correspondence nor any connected account of the transaction nor any indication of negotiated settlement. He cited the Resident's admission that during his conference with the Rajah an armed force halted at the palace-gate for a minute and rightly observed that Amir Singh had been intimidated into compliance by the repeated calling out of troops even after he had agreed to dismiss Shiva Rao from service, that the employment of Reverend Swartz, the declared enemy of the Rajah, seemed injudicious and that punctuality of his contributions precluded all necessity of proceeding with the assumption of

[10] Amir Singh, 25 January 1796, representation to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 47, pp. 67-68.

[11] Lord Hobart, 16 February 1796, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 47, p. 68.

administration.[12] In conclusion, he declared that the purpose of the treaty was defeated by the means employed for securing the acceptance and that 'justice and policy are inseparable; that an adherence to public faith is the basis of our political existence in India'.[13] At his instructions, the Madras Council abrogated the treaty, but as the Rajah's payments for the months of April and July 1797 went on default, the Company retained possession of the districts of Mayuram and Mannargudi until the arrears were realised.[14] Nevertheless, the impatient procedure of the Madras Council to secure the annexation of the Rajah's territories in violation of the treaty received a momentary setback.

2. Elevation of Serfoji

Disappointed in its endeavour to secure the co-operation of Amir Singh for the annexation of his territory, the Madras Council turned to Serfoji. A young prince with no experience in politics, Serfoji appeared to serve as a willing tool for the realisation of British designs. The process of the elevation of Serfoji to the throne was gradual.

In January 1791, at the time of strained relations with Amir Singh, the Company removed Serfoji from the palace of Amir Singh and placed him under the care of Reverend Swartz, a missionary of the imperialistic order. The exasperated Amir Singh rightly concluded that the Company cherished a design to uphold Serfoji as his rival. This in turn caused apprehension about the safety of the prince. Thereupon, the Madras Council, towards the close of the year, removed the prince together with the widows of Rajah Tuljaji to Madras, where they were accommodated in the Garden House of the Governor.[15] Lord Cornwallis took the next step when he suggested to the Madras Council to consider whether it would not be advisable to declare Serfoji as a presumptive heir to the throne of Tanjore, partly because he wanted to render Amir Singh more submissive to the English and partly because the Rajah had no son. On consultation, Reverend Swartz playing the part of the villain, suggested to the Madras

[12] H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 5, Delhi, no date, p. 360.

[13] Sir John Shore, letter to Madras Council, 9 July 1796, M.C., vol. 208, pp. 2870-2873.

[14] Lord Hobart in Council, 13 August 1797, M.C., vol. 208, pp. 5087-5091.

[15] Sir Oakeley, 16 November 1792, letter to Rajah of Tanjore, M.C.C., vol. 43, p. 355.

Council so definitely in favour of the right of Serfoji originating from adoption that he asserted it as a point of justice to consider whether the prince ought to be declared the lawful heir to the throne instead of presumptive successor, as the last epithet implied a reserve in favour of any children who might be born to the Rajah.[16] Yet, considering it essential to proceed with circumspection and delicacy in reversing what the Company itself did, Governor Sir Charles Oakeley (1792-1794) satisfied himself with the proclamation of Serfoji as the presumptive heir to the throne in May 1793.[17] Seeing the writing on the wall, Amir Singh appealed to the Maratha powers for assistance to eliminate British influence from his country,[18] but they were neither so united nor so powerful as to be of any service to Tanjore.[19]

In March 1796 Lord Hobart directed Macleod to examine the rights of Serfoji in consultation with the pandits who passed the verdict on adoption in 1787. Strangely all of the seven pandits whom the Resident consulted expressed their profound sorrow for their voting against Serfoji and took shelter under their ignorance of the Sastras or fear of the Rajah or favour which they expected. Fantastic still it was that Macleod, on the basis of the views of the pandits whose ignorance, partiality and dishonesty, they themselves very frankly confessed, asserted in favour of the legality of

[16] Madras Council, 2 May 1793, Political Despatches to England, vol. 2, pp. 206-210.

Swartz wrote to Lord Cornwallis thus: 'As I knew nothing of their Sastras, and the whole business was done so quickly, I was silent (when the twelve pandits declared adoption illegal). . . I afterwards read the translation of the Hindu Laws which were published in Bengal. I was astonished, when I found that those pandits had acted a base part'. (*The Tanjore Mahratta Principality*, p. 95).

[17] Madras Council, 2 May 1793, Political Despatches to England, vol. 2, pp. 206-210.

[18] Amir Singh's correspondence, a few letters in Marathi language, found in the Saraswathi Mahal Library, Tanjore, does not throw any startling light. The main theme confines to the Rajah's request to the Maratha powers for urgent action to liberate Tanjore from English control. In his letter to Nana Farnavis, Amir Singh informs him that Lord Hobart was giving great trouble and so the Rajah asks his aid to liberate the land from the influence of the 'toppiwalas' or hat-men. In his letter to the Peshwa the Rajah praised his reputation as well known throughout India and asserts that he alone could free the country from the British influence.

[19] *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings for 1954*, vol. 30, part 2, p. 48.

adoption.[20] In fact, much of the legality or not of the adoption depended upon the shifting of emphasis on the relative aspects of the flexible rules furnished by the Sastras. The Company, therefore, found it no difficult a job to take a political or a judicial decision as the circumstances warranted. The Madras Council referred the issue to London. In October 1798 it received the approval of the Court of Directors for the restoration of Serfoji to the throne and carried it into effect immediately.[21]

This terminated the chequered reign of Amir Singh contravening thereby the view of the Madras Council conveyed to the Court of Directors in 1791 when it made a separate provision for the support of Serfoji that 'he (Amir Singh) could not, if left to the genuine dictates of his own mind, possibly imagine that we had the smallest design in favour of Serfojee or his relations, that could be inconsistent with our Duty to the Company or with those Engagements that had his Excellency on the musnud (throne)—that our anxiety to secure the family of the late Rajah against the feelings of want could not with any justice be construed into a design of creating rivalship'.[22]

Though humiliated finally, Amir Singh's advent to kingship as well as exit contributed substantially to the British encroachment upon his administration. His engagements with the Company left him so bankrupt that he could do no real benefit to his

[20] Lord Hobart in Council, 1 July 1796, M.C., vol. 208, pp. 2719-2770.

The following extracts from the Sastras were cited.—According to the general rule, whoever has no son, neither grandson nor grandson's son, may adopt another child for his son. The child to be adopted ought to be born of one of the seven preceding generations and if in one of those seven generations, there is no child fit to be adopted, is to be found then in one of the seven more remote generations, may be chosen and this holds to be twenty first generation. But if in those twenty-one generations, no child fit to be adopted, is found, then the son of the daughter or sister or aunt may be chosen, provided it be of their own caste (Military Consultations, dated 1st July 1796). In the Meemamsa Sastra it is stated that father and mother cannot give their first born child or only child to be adopted to a strange tribe. But they give their first child and only child to be adopted to their own tribe, there is no guilt in its. (Military Consultations dated 27th September 1796). The pandits asserted that the age limit of five would apply only in instances when adopting from the direct male line from one common ancestor (Military Despatches to England, dated 25th January 1797).

[21] Madras Council, 15 October 1798, Political Despatches to England, vol. 4, pp. 200-208.

[22] Madras Council, 14 July 1791, Political Despatches to England, vol. 1, pp. 289-299.

country.[23] A liberal prince, no doubt, he worked for the welfare of his people. Anxious to promote cultivation, he granted an increase of the ryots' share of the produce, suspended the collection of duties on grain exported for the relief of the famine-stricken Ramnad in 1794,[24] set up a court and introduced individual settlement in the place of the village settlement. However, his revenue reform was of dubious merit. In an attempt to relieve himself from the trouble and responsibility incidental to revenue administration based upon village-settlement, he partitioned the territory into estates called 'puttockdams' and entrusted them with headmen called puttockdars. These renters combined in themselves the influence and authority of landed aristocrats and public officials. They paid a fixed amount as rent, but accumulated the surplus of the collections for themselves and received salary for their service. The growth of their influence during the period of strain caused by British policy, swept off every gradation of authority and reacted detrimentally upon the interests of the ruler.[25] Haunted by British machinations against his interests and embarrassed by financial strains, Amir Singh, in fact, had to struggle against insuperable odds. Still he did what he could for the benefit of the inhabitants.

3. Advent and Exit of Serfoji

In 1798 Serfoji returned to the throne which he gained through inheritance but lost at the instance of the English. He made an earnest attempt to improve his resources and the administration and to cultivate the favour of his imperial masters, with a firm hope to remain in power for long but found himself struggling under strange illusions.

Anxious to promote cultivation, the young ruler advanced loans to the peasants and revised the tax rates for the benefit of the inferior land-holders. A reduction of the prices of grain did not appear as an incentive to cultivation; still he carried it into effect as he found it essential to promote exports. As the rise of the puttockdars presented a threat to public authority, he dispensed with their services and reintroduced village settlement for the collection of revenue.[26] In 1799 Lord Wellesley declared war on

[23] *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings for 1954*, vol. 30, part 2, p. 48.

[24] Lord Hobart in Council, 24 October 1794, Revenue Consultations, vol. 58, pp. 2040-2052.

[25] Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, 1799, paras 12 and 13.

[26] Lord Clive in Council, 18 July 1799, M.C., vol. 256, pp. 4781-4789.

Mysore because of the alliance of Tipu Sultan with the French. Despite the magnitude of the demands for the supply of provisions to feed the army and the bullocks for dragging the loads, the prince exacted them from the inhabitants and placed them at the service of the Company. So heavy was the drain of these resources that it caused famine in the land and stagnation of traffic in goods.[27]

In addition to the short supply of grain and the inadequacy of finances, disloyalty of troops presented serious problems to the administration of Serfoji. The troops enlisted into service by Amir Singh but now thrown out of employment clamoured for the arrears of pay. They organised demonstrations in the capital in contempt of the ruler's authority.[28] The servants of the Company too contributed to his predicament. They not only exercised overriding authority, but held the Rajah's administration in ridicule, for they seized the public servants and prevented the people from attending his offices. Serfoji made entreaties to the Madras Council for succour but to no avail. He complained: 'I am as if imprisoned, which is the cause of much disgrace to me in the world'.[29] So bitter was the humiliation he suffered at the hands of the Company's servants, that Serfoji found no alternative but to surrender power.

In the elevation of Serfoji to the throne, the Madras Council poised the hope of taking quick possession of Tanjore. It made a search for an excuse, but nothing make-believe could be discovered. The Bengal Council, therefore, instructed Fort St George to proceed with the assumption of administration, if Serfoji himself conveyed such a desire. It was indeed no difficult a task for the Madras Council to extract a desire from the young ruler. Within a few days Serfoji confessed that he had no experience in the transaction of public business and requested Fort St George to take over the administration of his state for a period of not more than two years. Now no impediment remained, still other considerations dissuaded the Madras Council from assuming the administration. As the prospects of a fourth war with Mysore loomed large, Lord Wellesley contemplated upon an alliance with the Maratha powers. For fear that the assumption of Tanjore would result in the alienation of the Maratha powers, he observed restraint. The Madras Council now appointed a Commission

[27] Lord Clive in Council, 6 August 1799, M.C., vol. 256, p. 4782.

[28] -do- 21st December 1798, M.C., vol. 246, pp. 8055-8064.

[29] Serfoji, 9 November, complaint to Madras Council, M.C.C., vol. 49, pp. 321-328.

consisting of Benjamin Torin, Charles Harris, and George Stratton apparently to assist the prince. It directed the Commission to carry out a minute investigation into the economic and administrative affairs of the state.[30]

The report of the Tanjore Commissioners furnished a graphic account of the administration of revenue and justice, the classes of society and the state of manufacture, agriculture and the like. It attributed the corruption in administration to the collusion of public officials with the land-holders, the undue influence of the renters, over-grown powers of the kavalkars or village-guards and the absence of proper accounts. Though these maladies came to prevail during the reign of Pratap Singh, they were left uncorrected. In order to improve this sad state of affairs, the Commission suggested the rectification of the undefined state of revenue and the inequality in the rates of assessment. It felt it essential to restore the powers granted to the renters and assignees to the servants of the government. It recommended a settlement of revenue with the head inhabitants of the villages as the most suitable form of revenue administration. In its view, it was necessary to appoint accountants to keep revenue accounts in the villages and to restrict the powers of the kavalkars to keep watch of the properties. Significantly, the Commission made no attempt to examine the effect of British policy upon the administration and economy. Prepared with the objective of facilitating a smooth takeover of the country by the English, the report proved of great assistance.[31]

In October 1799, soon after the successful conclusion of the Fourth Mysore War and the completion of the investigation, Governor Edward Lord Clive (1798-1803), at the instructions of Lord Wellesley, directed Resident Benjamin Torin to take prompt steps for the annexation of Tanjore. Torin explained to Serfoji, in the course of a meeting, of a new settlement which the Company had in view for the rectification of the defects in the existing system. The prince, taken by complete surprise, exclaimed that he was confident of his ability to rectify the evils which his reign had inherited from the past and improve the administration. But the Resident declared that the more the Rajah understood the novelty of the scheme, the more readily he would concur. The helpless prince convinced of the futility of any opposition, but anxious to recover the composure of his mind, requested

[30] Madras Council, 15 October 1798, Political Despatches to England, vol. 4, p. 200.

[31] Report of the Tanjore Commissioners, 1799.

for time before he could convey his decision. A few days later, he summoned the Resident to his palace and gave his consent, remarking that the proposal of the English had originated from a motive intended for the promotion of his and his people's prosperity. The whole transaction, in consequence, gave the appearance of that between parties of identical views.[32] In reality, Serfoji, though he was efficient and learned,[33] saw the writing on the wall at the right moment and compromised with the rising tide of British power over which he had no control and made a graceful exit from power.

4. Treaty of Annexation, 1799

The English gave a strange title, 'Treaty for cementing the friendship and alliance between the Company and the Rajah of Tanjore and for establishing the Government of Tanjore on a permanent Foundation' to the settlement which provided for the extinction of the principality. Dated the 25th of October 1799, it contained fifteen articles. The introduction to the treaty stated that the new settlement was made as the treaty of 1792 was found inadequate to the intentions of both parties, for the better management of the country and for securing to the Company a regular discharge of their existing and future demands on the state. The first article reiterated that the friends and enemies of either party were the friends and enemies of both the signatories.

The second article annulled all the former provisions, laid down for securing partial or temporary interference on the part of the Company in the government of Tanjore and provided in lieu thereof the establishment of a permanent system for the collection of revenue and the administration of justice in the manner described in subsequent articles. The third article empowered the English to ascertain, determine and establish rights of property and to fix a reasonable assessment on a permanent basis. The fourth article provided 'for the establishment of courts under the sole authority of the Company for the administration of civil and criminal justice according to ordinances and regulations to be enacted with due regard to the existing laws and usages of the country, by the Governor-in-Council of Fort St George. The fifth article deprived the Rajah of his right to interfere in the revenue administration of the territory. The sixth article charged the

[32] B. S. Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook* (Madras, 1957), p. 83.

[33] Serfoji is described as one of the best of the Mahratta rulers of Tanjore. (William Hickey, *The Tanjore Mahratta Principality*, p. 87).

Company with the payment of the part of the registered private debt which had not already been transferred to its account. The seventh article stipulated that the Rajah would receive from the Company every year one lakh of star pagodas and a proportion of one-fifth of what remained of the net revenue after deducting all charges of collection and the amount allotted for the support of Amir Singh. The eighth article appropriated 25,000 star pagodas annually for the support of Amir Singh. The ninth article affirmed that the Rajah would be treated with all the attention, respect and honour which was due to a friend and ally of the British nation.

The tenth article left the fort of Tanjore in possession of the Rajah but authorised the Company to use it as a military post if the English found it so essential during a war fought in the Carnatic. The eleventh article guaranteed against the Rajah permitting the fort to be used as an asylum by public offenders. The twelfth article specified mutual arrangement between the Company and the Rajah, that was found essential for the effective administration of justice involving the relations of the Rajah and residents of the fort.

The thirteenth article granted authority to the Rajah to inspect the revenue accounts of Tanjore. The next article confirmed his right to receive the annual peishcush of 2,000 chakrams from the Danish settlement of Tranquebar. The fifteenth article bound the Company to supply to the Rajah the needed quantities of grain and other commodities at the market rates, exclusive of the charges of transportation.[34]

After the conclusion of the treaty, the Madras Council recovered sixty-four villages mortgaged to the Danes. By an agreement with Anker, the Governor of Tranquebar, the Company cleared a loan of 1,26,102 pagodas borrowed by Amir Singh and redeemed the control of the villages.[35] These settlements secured for the English the possession of Tanjore except the fort and a few European settlements. The Madras Council made a bold claim that it concluded the treaty 'not only with the full consent, but with the zealous co-operation of the Rajah for the permanent benefit of his people'.[36] It conveniently ignored the tactics of pressure and ridicule, employed against the Rajah's administration

[34] Treaty of Tanjore, 25 October 1799, M.C., vol. 259, pp. 6786-6796.

[35] Madras Council, 9 October 1800, Political Despatches to England, vol. 5, pp. 409-412.

[36] Edward Lord Clive, 5 November 1799, M.C., vol. 259, pp. 6745-6747.

for the accomplishment of its objective. As a matter of diplomatic dexterity the treaty strictly avoided the use of the word 'annexation', but achieved its purpose by a projection of the principle adopted in previous settlements, namely the restriction of the Rajah's rights and extension of the limits of British sphere. The assumption of administration by the Company replaced the dual system in Tanjore, but still it did not wipe out the latter completely, for the Rajah retained control of the fort of Tanjore and the right to inspect the revenue accounts and to receive a share of the public income. Nevertheless, the English acquired possession of a fertile territory of 4,000 square miles, deprived it of its political individuality and absorbed it as a part of their far-flung empire. The British power diplomacy, at last, swept the Máráthas of Tanjore into political oblivion; but what the rulers did for religion and literature left their indelible marks on the history of the land.

5. Triumph of British Designs

The annexation of Tanjore marked the triumph of Anglo-Saxon designs over the Wallajah-Maratha rights in this territory. However the ultimate take-over of the administration was more formal than real. The growth of British influence had already eclipsed the Nawab's sovereignty over the country to almost nullity. Already the Company had gained possession of parts of the territory, established military authority and forced the ruler to contribute a large part of his annual revenue. Naturally this trend that was at work for several decades past had its logical culmination in the complete assumption of the reins of power by the English.

It is difficult to indicate why the Company decided on the annexation in the year 1799 instead of at a different time. It did not venture into it at an earlier date possibly because of the fear of an adverse reaction from the Maratha powers and because of the inadequacy of preparation both in personnel and training. The year 1799 offered a favourable turn of circumstances, obviating thereby the necessity of waiting for a later time. The advent of two staunch imperialists—Lord Wellesley as Governor-General of Bengal and Edward Lord Clive as Governor of Madras—imparted a fresh vigour into the British forward policy against the Indian powers. With Mysore vanquished, a result of the war of 1799, the Company no longer found any necessity of seeking alliance with the Marathas. The investigation conducted by

the Tanjore Commission in the meantime prepared the ground for the eventual take-over. No wonder, these developments synchronised with the annexation of the state.

The Company observed no constitutional maxims even in the last phase of its power diplomacy in Tanjore. It interfered in the internal administration of the state and employed force in seeking territorial advantages,—all in violation of the obligations stipulated by the treaty of 1793. The English proceeded to regulate such important questions as adoption and succession without the sanction of the Nawab. The making and unmaking of kings and the acquisition of political concessions, in fact, marked a total disregard for the constitutional rights of the Wallajahs. Perhaps the Company sought to forestall this constitutional incompatibility by a deliberate omission of the word 'annexation' in the treaty of 1799.

The political developments in Tanjore had adverse effect on the fortunes of other powers. The Marathas lost their solitary out-post on the eastern coast. The French, Dutch and Danes retained possession of their trading settlements in the territory but their commerce languished under British domination. The country, after a long period of independence, now lost its freedom. As part of the British Empire it was destined to share the stresses and strains of the wider stream of Indian life.

CONCLUSION

An alliance of expediency, aimed at political ascendancy—sums up the history of the ramifications assumed by Anglo-Saxon diplomacy in Tanjore. Threatened by common enemies and anxious to gain advantages, the English East India Company and Tanjore entered into amicable relations. Paradoxically this alliance conferred no benefit upon the principality. The keen contest of the Nevayets with the Wallajahs for the possession of Trichinopoly ensured the survival of the state but when the English joined the camp of Mohammad Ali, they drew their ally, the Rajah of Tanjore, into the war. The refusal of Mohammad Ali to cede Trichinopoly to Mysore led to a renewal of conflict. This time too the English exacted military as well as economic services from Tanjore by virtue of their alliance. The long wars had left large areas of the state desolated, its economic resources depleted and military power exhausted. Nevertheless, Tanjore emerged as one in the group of victorious powers, with its independence preserved and territory expanded with the acquisition of Koilody and Elangad from the Nawab.

Tanjore appeared powerful to maintain its independence and influence against any threat from the Nawab of the Carnatic, but what altered this favourable situation was the betrayal by its ally, the English. The Nawab held possession of an extensive territory and seemed susceptible to its influence. The Company considered the services of the Nawab of paramount interest to fight its wars against other powers. It needed a base of operations and the resources of the country. In consequence, it found it expedient to abandon the cause of Tanjore and to support the Nawab in his pretensions against the kingdom. Under pressure from the Madras Council, Tanjore agreed to the settlement of 1762, paid tribute and acknowledged the Wallajah sovereignty. Not long after, other betrayals of the state by the one-time ally followed. The Company rendered military assistance to the Nawab for the invasion of Tanjore in 1771 and for conquest in 1773. In return, it reaped material rewards and political advantages from the Carnatic.

The rendition of Tanjore to the Maratha house in 1776 restored the territory to political individuality, but it lost the substance of its independence. From the status of a dependent principality of the Carnatic, it was reduced to that of a protectorate of the Company, with financial burden enhanced, foreign relations

curbed and military strength crippled. Incidentally at this point, the British policy towards Tanjore as different from that towards the Carnatic assumed distinct proportions. If the English treated the Nawab as an ally if not as a dependent ruler, it considered the Rajah as a protected prince, functioning strictly and exclusively within their sphere of influence. The outbreak of the Second Mysore War (1780-1784) contributed to the solidification of this division of interests. Embarrassed by the Carnatic expedition by Hyder Ali, the Nawab not only compromised with the Company's interposition in Tanjore but consented to the exclusion of his right of receiving tribute. This development left the English completely free in the affairs of Tanjore. Now the Madras Council proceeded ahead with the liquidation of the remnant of the rights of the Rajah. In repudiation of the succession settlement effected by Tuljaji, it enthroned Amir Singh and exacted favourable terms by the treaty of 1787. Still it did not stop here. Taking advantage of the Third Mysore War (1790-1792), the English assumed the revenue administration for three years and imposed another treaty. As the resistance of Amir Singh to British encroachments upon his jurisdiction became pronounced, the Company replaced him by Serfoji and secured the annexation of the state. The liquidation of the principality climaxed the working of British diplomacy in the state.

Four distinct phases marked the transition of the Company from its status as an ally of Tanjore to absolute mastery. In the first phase, with the assistance of the kingdom, the English extinguished the influence of the Nevayets, Mysoreans and the French from the Carnatic. No more did Tanjore fear any threat from these eliminated powers. But it upset the balance of power which had so long prevailed and there remained no force to engage the imperialistic aspiration of its powerful ally, the English. This development, significant as it was, adversely reacted upon the interests of the state. In the second stage, the Company eliminated the rights of the Nawab from Tanjore. It accomplished this in a tactful but roundabout way. While in collusion with Mohammad Ali it secured the extinction of the state, in opposition to his will, it restored the country to the Maratha house. The 'favour' done to the Rajah in this process served as the basis for the assertion of British power on Tanjore—carried out during the third phase. As a protected state of the Company, the kingdom lost the place it long held as an economic and military factor in the Carnatic. British interventions in the internal affairs of the state leading to the eventual annexation marked the final stage of the transactions.

The concept of 'aid and alliance'—a device that gives the appearance of a lamb to the wolf, too—extensively and successfully experimented with by the Anglo-Saxons in their global diplomacy for the advancement of their interests, found expression, but in a miniature form, in the small state of Tanjore. This erected a division of interests in favour of the English in the Carnatic. When the opposite camp went down, the principality experienced the real implications of 'aid and alliance'. Isolated and grown dependent, it could offer no resistance to the Anglo-Saxon machinations. The Company, as a next step, played one faction against another, until it realised its long-term objective.

In different degrees the all-India patterns of British diplomacy found reflection on Tanjore. The early policy of 'ring fence' aimed at the preservation of the Company's territory by having around it a ring of friendly neighbouring states was found of no necessity in Tanjore, as it had no considerable possession. In accordance with the principle asserted in the Pitt's India Act of 1784 that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India is repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of this nation', Governor-General Sir John Shore (1793-1798) followed a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the Indian States. True to this, the Company took no territory from Tanjore, but it cannot be denied that it assumed the revenues of the country in 1790 and consolidated its influence by the treaties of 1787 and 1793. While the subsidiary system of Governor-General Lord Wellesley (1798-1805), gave protection to an Indian state against external and internal enemies in return for territorial or financial compensations, the policy of subordinate isolation and co-operation of Governor-General Lord Hastings (1813-1823) provided for the subordination of an Indian state to the Company in foreign relations, co-operation in military affairs and isolation from other powers. The Tanjore treaties of 1776, 1787 and 1793 incorporated the principles elaborated subsequently by these doctrines. The treaty of 1799 stretched the principle asserted by the subsidiary system to that extent that protection cost the cession of the whole of Tanjore except the fort in the capital. The doctrine of lapse extensively applied at a later time by Governor-General Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) secured for the English the possession of numerous dependent states whose rulers died without leaving natural heirs to the throne. In accordance with this principle, Tanjore should have lapsed with the Carnatic in 1787 when Tuljaji died without leaving a natural heir, for the Nawab retained sovereignty over the principality. But the Madras Council did

not concede this. Nevertheless, the Company's repudiation of the succession settlement, made by Tuljaji with adoption as its basis, marked a stage in the evolution of this doctrine.

The Nawab of the Carnatic reacted against British relations with Tanjore with considerable sagacity, but was ultimately outwitted because of his military weakness. He claimed sovereignty over Tanjore, but found it impossible to enforce it. When the Company acquired Devikottai by force of arms, he raised no opposition as he himself was preoccupied with the wars in the Carnatic—for which he needed British aid. Soon after he consolidated his rule, he gained recognition of his sovereignty over Tanjore. In the process, he neutralised his rights, as he gave the role of an arbiter to the Company in his relations with his tributary. If he accepted a restriction on his sovereignty, he regained it in full when he gained the annexation of the state with British support. By implication, the Company relinquished its rights, for its support to annexation meant its recognition of that process of the assertion of Nawab's sovereignty. Mohammad Ali utilised what the Company did unwittingly for the consolidation of his independence against the English. He rightly opposed the restoration of the territory to the Marathas, but did not succeed because of the military superiority of his ally. Nevertheless, the restoration was unconstitutional as it violated his sovereignty. The helpless Nawab, on the other hand, embarrassed with the Mysorean incursions into his territory, military weakness and pecuniary difficulties, compromised with his setback in the state.

However, it cannot be denied that the Nawab committed an error of judgment when he sought British aid in coercing a ruler dependent upon him. The occasion demanded self-reliance. If he had no strength to achieve his objective, what was open to him was to conciliate the ruler of Tanjore and to win his friendship. This would have strengthened his hand in presenting a stand against the steady advance made by British power in the Carnatic. His failure in Tanjore not only swept off his rights from the kingdom but threw his own security in jeopardy. This was the logical sequel of his associating an alien power in the settlement of an internal issue.

The Rajahs of Tanjore of this period were in general able, but not always farsighted. Pratap Singh accepted the British alliance in good faith, but he ignored their adventurist and opportunist character. The vanquishment of the powers opposed to the Company deprived him of any freedom of choice. The decline of the Marathas deprived him of any source of possible support.

Left at the mercy of his allies, he accepted what they dictated to him. Tuljaji inherited this anomaly. Rightly, he sought to strengthen his power with the acquisition of the Marawa territory, but the time appeared unfavourable. Hence the formation of an alliance with the contiguous principalities of Pudukkottai, Ramnad and Sivaganga for self-defence seemed as the best alternative. His conflict with the Marawas, on the other hand, gave an opportunity to the Nawab and the Company to destroy his influence. Motivated by selfish interests Amir Singh accepted the throne from the English. This served the purpose of the Company. Even if he refused the offer, the alternative did not appear better, as the Company was determined to extort more concessions. The progressive liquidation of public debt by Amir Singh offered a prospect for Tanjore to get rid of the financial entanglements created by the imposition of treaties. But the English gave him no such opportunity. As he refused to play to their tune and cede territories, they enthroned Serfoji and acquired the territory. Prince Serfoji retained the title of Rajah, but no territory to govern, and kept the possession of the fort but no garrison to defend. While the rulers passed into political oblivion partly due to their miscalculations and partly due to British machinations, the inhabitants—the silent spectators of the drama of events—accepted political slavery under a foreign power, reaping the harvest of their neglect of political affairs.

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